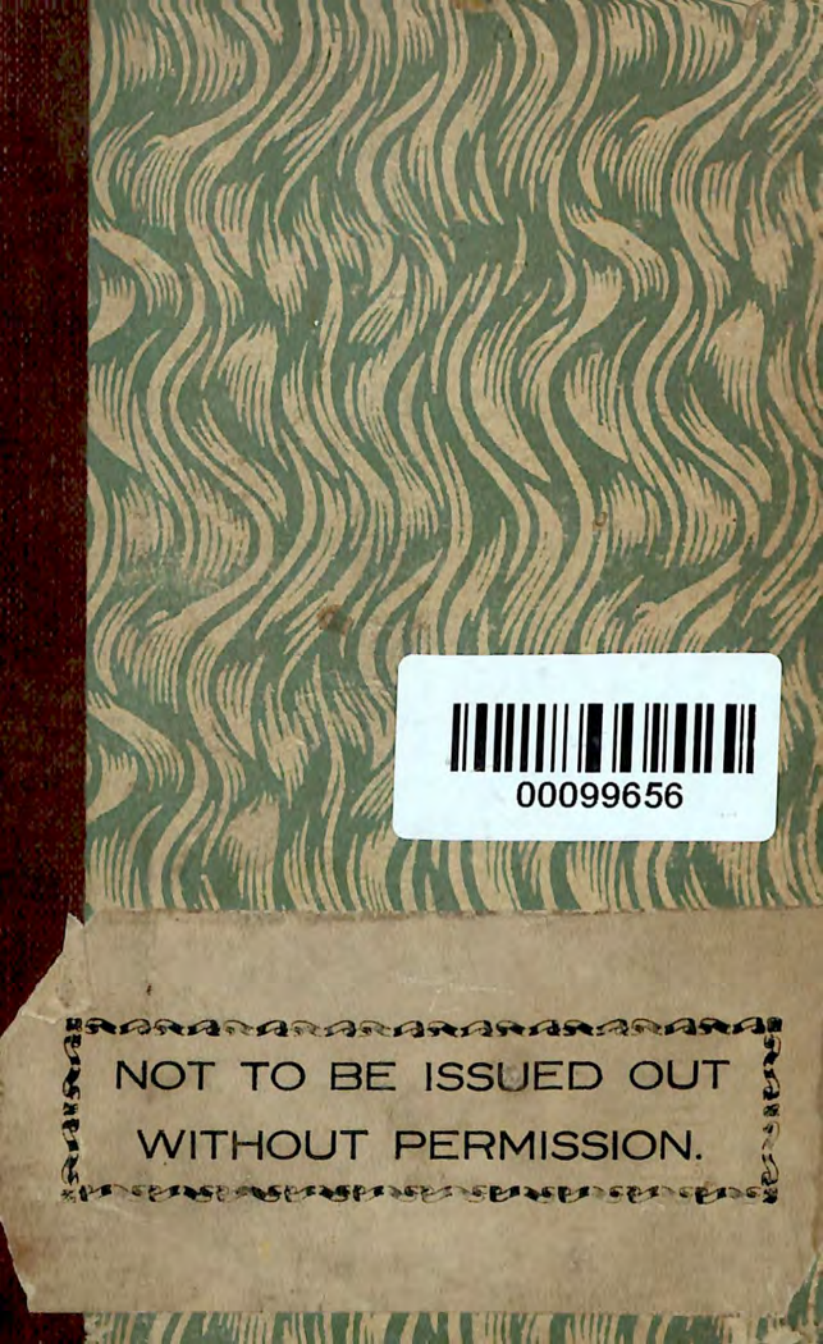
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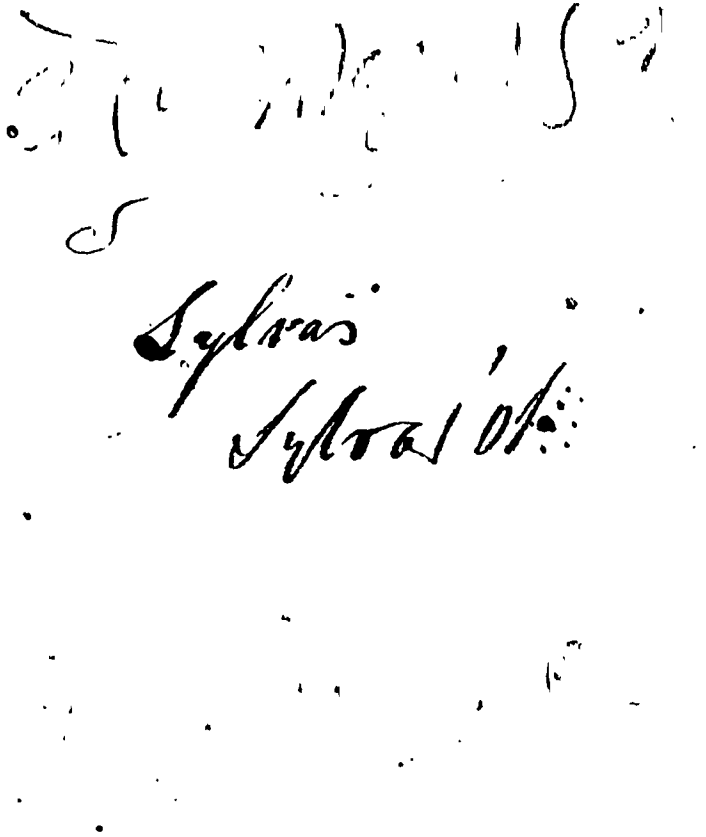

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THE

LETTERS

OF

MRS. ELIZABETH MONTAGU,

WITH SOME OF THE LETTERS OF HER CORRESPONDENTS.

99656

PART THE FIRST,

CONTAINING HER LETTERS FROM AN EARLY AGE TO THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE.

PUBLISHED BY

MATTHEW MONTAGU, ESQ. M. P.

HER NEPHEW AND EXECUTOR.

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1810.

Good

MRS. MONTAGU'S LETTERS,

&c.

ELIZABETH, daughter of Matthew Robinson, Esq. of West Layton, in Yorkshire, of Coveney, Cambridgeshire, and of Mount Morris, in Kent, by Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of Robert Drake, Esq. was born at York, on the second of October, 1720.

Her father was grandson of Sir Leonard Robinson, who was the youngest son of Thomas Robinson, Esq. of Rokeby, in the county of York. The family of Robinsons of Rokeby were descended from the family of Robertsons, Barons of Strowan, in Scotland; the above mentioned Thomas Robinson, of Rokeby, her great great grandfather, being the fourth

in descent since their removal into England.

The Robinsons of Rokeby were promoted to the rank of baronets of England in 1730, in the person of Sir Thomas Robinson, then member of Parliament for the borough of Morpeth; and of peers of Ireland by the title of Baron Rokeby of Armagh, in the person of Richard Archbishop of Armagh, and Primate of Ireland, whose meritorious exertions for the improvement of that kingdom, during the thirty years of his primacy, are too well known to require description in this place. Both these honours having been given with remainder to the Robinsons of West Layton, have since devolved, first on Matthew Robinson Morris, the elder brother of Mrs. Montagu, and are now held by Morris Lord Rokeby, her nephew.

Her father resided at West Layton Hall, derived by inheritance from the heiress of the ancient family of Layton in that place, and at Edgeley, in Wensley Dale, during the summer, and at York

during the winter, until she was about seven years of age. Her mother becoming, by the death of her brother, the heiress not only of her father's property at Coveney in Cambridgeshire, but also of the Kentish property at Mount Morris, as heiress of Sarah her mother, daughter and heiress of Thomas Morris, Esq. the family removed from Yorkshire; first to Cambridge, and afterwards to Mount Morris, otherwise called Monks Horton, near Hithe, in Kent, where she continued to reside with her father and mother, until her marriage in 1742, with Edward Montagu, Esq. grandson of the first Earl of Sandwich, and member of several successive Parliaments, for the borough of Huntingdon.

During her residence in Cambridgeshire she derived great assistance in her education from Dr. Middleton, the author of the life of Cicero, whom her grandmother had taken as a second husband. Her uncommon sensibility and acuteness of understanding, as well as her extraordinary beauty as a child, rendered her an

object of great notice and admiration in the University, and Dr. Middleton was in the habit of requiring from her an account of the learned conversations at which, in his society, she was frequently present; not admitting of the excuse of her tender age as a disqualification, but insisting that although at the present time she could but imperfectly understand their meaning, she would in future derive great benefit from the habit of attention inculcated by this practice.

Her father, who had married at the age of eighteen, being then a fellow-commoner in the University, was a person of great intellectual endowments, and much admired for his talents of conversation, and for his taste in the fine arts, particularly in painting, in which he acquired so great a proficiency as to exce. most of the professed artists of his day in landscape. He was proud of the distinguished notice bestowed on his daughter, and contributed to increase in her the vivacity of wit, with which, like himself, she naturally abounded ; and although, as she

advanced in age, it was frequently discovered that two persons with such powers of repartee could not fail to clash in argument, yet while he affected to repress her promptness of reply, which sometimes embarrassed him, he at other times afforded perhaps too much encouragement to those sallies of humour, which by grave readers may be thought to form too large a part of her early correspondence.

Mr. Robinson had by his marriage twelve children; nine of whom, seven sons and two daughters, survived the period of Mrs. Montagu's marriage.

From a regard to the interests of his numerous family, Mr. Robinson was induced to spend more time in the country than was consonant with his love of social conversation; and the impatience with which he endured the privation of his favourite enjoyment, may be considered as a proof of his merit in submitting to so severe an act of self-denial. We find him described in the correspondence

as troubled by the spleen, and not always preserving a perfect equanimity amidst the dulness of a country neighbourhood. This state of ennui gave a tincture of sarcasm to his conversation, which his children might naturally be expected to imbibe.

Mrs. Montagu, in her early education, did not receive those strong impressions of the truth of divine revelation, which she acquired at a later period, from her intimacy with Gilbert West and Lord Lyttelton. It was reserved for the influence of the steady principles of Christianity, to correct the exuberant spirit of her genius, and to give the last touches of improvement to her character.

Her brothers were likewise much addicted to literary studies, and became early distinguished scholars. Their emulation produced a corresponding zeal in their sisters, and a diligence of application unusual in the females of that time. Their domestic circle was accustomed to

struggle for the mastery in wit, or the superiority in argument; and their mother, whose frame of mind partook rather of the gentle sedateness of good sense, than of the eccentricities of genius, was denominated by them the Speaker, from the frequent mediation by which she moderated their eagerness for victory.

During the residence of the family in Cambridgeshire, from different visits at Wimpole with her father and mother, arose the intimacy with Mrs. Montagu's earliest correspondent, Lady Margaret Cavendish Harley, only daughter and heiress of Edward, second Earl of Oxford and Mortimer. Lady Margaret Harley was born Feb. 11, 1714, and was married 1734 to William, second Duke of Portland.

On the back of the first letter is written by Lady Margaret, "Mrs. Eliza Robinson's letter, received Feb. 24, 173$\frac{1}{2}$ at Wimpole." It appears by this letter that she had been on a visit at Wimpole with her mother. She was then eleven years

of age; Lady Margaret eighteen. Her letters to this correspondent, which have been all preserved from that early period, abound with vivacity and girlish playfulness. They present an interesting picture of her understanding; but as they were written with the freedom of intimate conversation, and were principally dictated by the desire of amusing her friend, they contain many lively sallies at the expense of her country neighbours, which may be thought too satirical upon a grave review. But notwithstanding the embarrassment I feel from the wish of producing nothing which may cast a less favourable light upon her disposition, or hurt the feelings of families connected with the individuals mentioned, I am induced to give extracts from this early correspondence, as they will most naturally exhibit the progress of her mind. And I am convinced that it will not be thought the least of her merits to have subdued the propensity to satire, which a gay temper, a playful fancy, and a

singular facility of expression must have rendered a perpetual temptation.

A letter dated Cambridge, April 6th, 1732, affords the earliest instance of this species of levity.

"This Cambridge is the dullest place, it neither affords any thing entertaining or ridiculous enough to put into a letter. Were it half so difficult to find something to say as something to write, what a melancholy set of people should we be who love prating!" The love of society and of the capital, as the great resort of amusement and conversation, appears early, and continued strong through the whole of her life.

"Horton, Jan. 27, 173$\frac{3}{4}$. I hope I shall have the pleasure of paying my respects to your Ladyship soon, for though I am tired of the country, to my great satisfaction, I am not so much so as my papa; he is a little vapoured, and last night after two hours silence he broke out into a great exclamation against the country, and concluded in saying, that living in the country was sleeping with one's eyes

open; if he sleeps all day I am sure he dreams very much of London. What makes this place more dull is, my brothers are none of them here; two of them went away about a fortnight ago, and ever since my papa has ordered me to put a double quantity of saffron in his tea. I beg you would not mention a word of this to my papa, when he has the honour of seeing you, for fear he should think I make too free with him."

"Horton, February 11th, 1734. Dr. Middleton sends us word my papa's acquaintance wonder he has not the spleen, but they would cease their surprise if they knew he is so much troubled with it, that his physician cannot prescribe him any cordial strong enough to keep up his spirits. We think London would do it effectually, and I believe he will have recourse to it. But not seeing any want of spirits in me, he will not be troubled with my company. I have thought of feigning melancholy, but have considered, upon mature deliberation, that he would be so glad to find

me silent, as never to let me stir again, lest I should return to my primitive talkativeness and impertinence."

To the Dutchess of Portland.

Horton, May 22, 1734.

MADAM,

I suppose by this time the town is empty enough to give you leisure to read a tedious letter from a country correspondent. I have forborne writing in compassion to your Grace, but now I may be allowed to have some upon myself; but such is my misfortune I have nothing to entertain you with. If I should preach a sermon upon an old woman who died yesterday, you would think it a dry subject; or if I tell you my papa's dogs have devoured my young turkies, you will rather laugh at me than pity me: or should I give you an account of our bustle about the election, it would not entertain you extremely. I think I may tell you, our new members have given a ball, and I am very glad they met with success, since they

have made so good an use of it. I was too far distant from the ball to go to it, which afflicted me more than either the loss of the old woman or the turkies.

I am surprised that my answer to your Grace's letter has never reached your hands. I sent it immediately to Canterbury by the servant of a gentleman who dined here, and I suppose he forgot to put it in the post. I am reconciled to the carelessness of the fellow, since it has procured to me so particular a mark of your concern. If my letter were sensible, what would be its mortification, that, instead of having the honour to kiss your Grace's hands, it must lie confined in the footman's pocket, with greasy gloves, rotten apples, mouldy nuts, a pack of dirty cards, and the only companion of its sort, a tender epistle from his sweetheart, "tru tell Deth." Perhaps by its situation subject to be kicked by his master every morning, till at last, by ill usage and rude company, worn too thin for any other use, it may make its exit in lighting a tobacco pipe. I believe the

fellow who lost my letter knew very well how ready I should be to supply it with another.

I am, Madam,

your Grace's most obedient servant,

ELIZABETH ROBINSON.

To the Same.

Horton, November 3d, 1734.

MADAM,

I HOPE your Grace will have no more returns of your fever, for though you may bear them with patience, I cannot; and I shall put on as musty a face at the fever, as Miss W—— could make at my incivility, or the absence of Doctor Saudys; to describe the horror of which, would require at least as tragic a bard as Lee: for then "she would look, good gods, how she would look!"

I am extremely glad Lady Oxford* has

* Henrietta Cavendish Holles, daughter and heiress of John Duke of Newcastle.

found so much benefit by the Bath waters; we talked of going to Bath, but my papa is so well that it is laid aside. I am very glad my papa has recovered his health, or rather his spirits, for that was all he wanted: but I should have been better pleased if he had gone to Bath first, to have attributed his cure to that circumstance. One common objection to the country is, one sees no faces but those of one's own family; but my papa thinks he has found a remedy for that, by teaching me to draw; but then he husbands these faces in so cruel a manner, that he brings me sometimes a nose, sometimes an eye at a time: but on the King's birthday, as it was a festival, he brought me out a whole face with its mouth wide open. If I could draw well enough, I would send Miss W. her own musty face. I am sorry Le Brun has not seen it, that he might have put it in his book of drawings among the faces that express the several passions: but he has none that express mustiness.

Your Grace desired me to send you

some verses. I have not heard so much as a rhyme lately, and I believe the Muses have all got agues in this country; but I have enclosed you the following summons, which we sent an old batchelor, who is very much our humble servant, and would die, but not dance for us; but being once in great necessity for partners, we thought him better than an elbow chair, and compelled him to come by this summons, which pleased me extremely, as I believe it was the first time he ever found the power of the fair sex. I must beg pardon of your Grace for sending any thing so trifling. My Papa and Mamma desire their best respects to your Grace. To make room for other nonsense, I must conclude my own, and only beg your Grace to believe me,

Madam,

your most obedient humble servant,

ELIZABETH ROBINSON.

Kent. *To J. B. Esq.*

"WHEREAS, complaint has been made to us Commissioners of Her Majesty's Balls, Hops, Assemblies, &c. for the county aforesaid, that several able and expert men, brought up, and instructed in the art or mystery of dancing, have and daily do refuse, though often thereunto requested, to be retained and exercised in the aforesaid art or mystery, to the occasion of great scarcity of good dancers in these parts, and contrary to the laws of gallantry and good manners, in that case made and provided; and whereas, we are likewise credibly informed that you, J. B. Esq. though educated in the said art by that celebrated master —— Lally, senior, are one of the most notorious offenders in this point, these are therefore in the name of the Fair Sex, to require you, the said J. B. Esq. personally to be and to appear before us at our meeting holden this day at the sign of the Golden Ball,* in the parish of Horton, in the

* It is the ball on the top of the house.

county aforesaid, between the hours of twelve and one in the forenoon, to answer to such matters as shall be objected against you, concerning the aforesaid refusal, and contempt of our jurisdiction and authority; and to bring with you your dancing shoes, laced waistcoat, and white gloves. And hereof fail not, under peril of our frown, and of being from henceforth deemed and accounted an old batchelor. Given under our hands and seals this eighth day of October, 1734, to which we all set our hands."

To the Same.

June 21st, in the morning.

MADAM,

I SHOULD have answered your Grace's letter before this time, had I been at home; but I went to make a visit to my neighbour, Mrs. K——, the day after I received it, and did not return till yester-

day. I can easily suppose the hurry of diversions you were in upon your release after so long a confinement to the house. If you had as many different diversions in town, as you have employments in the country, I have no notion how you could dispatch them in so short a time; no shepherdess in the plains of Arcadia had ever more rural amusements than my Lady Dutchess; you did not mention your riding upon a milk white palfrey, with captivated knights by your side, but I imagine your Grace only suppressed that part of your pastoral romance, for fear I should not think it so humble as the spinning-wheel. I expect to see your spinning as great in story as Penelope's web. I used to doubt the truth of Hercules's spinning at Queen Omphale's distaff, but now I see what delicate forms may be employed in that work, it is no longer the subject of my wonder or contempt: and I begin to think it the finest adventure of his life. I remember the conclusion of a song, which used formerly to be sung by a shepherd and shepherdess,

but I intend to put it down in my song book, by a Duke and a Dutchess:

Dutchess. So I'll to my distaff.
Duke. And I'll to my plough.

I should be much obliged to your Grace if you would do me the honour to send me some decent limb of your drawing. If you design to make any proficiency in that art, I would advise you not to draw old men's heads. It was the rueful countenance of Socrates or Seneca that first put me out of conceit with it; had my papa given me the blooming faces of Adonis and Narcissus, I might have been a more apt scholar; and when I told him I found those great beards difficult to draw, he gave me St. John's head in a charger; so to avoid the speculation of dismal faces, which by my art I dismalized ten times more than they were before, I threw away my pencil. If I drew a group of little figures, I made their countenances so sad, and their limbs so distorted, that from a set of laughing

Cupids, they looked like the tormented infants in Herod's cruelty, and smiling Venus like Rachel weeping for her children. Though my happy genius chiefly led me to the drawing tragi-comic countenances, for I drew down the eyes till they looked as if they were weeping, and turned up the ends of the mouth, which gave an amiable simper to the lower part of the face: with some vanity I say it, nobody drew a compound passion, such as grief and joy, and pain and pleausure, better than myself: like my famed predecessor, Apelles, I have drawn as well with a happy stroke of my pencil as it has fallen out of my hand, as ever I did with pains and study. I have heard of some who have been famous landscape painters; others who have been famous battle painters; but I take myself to have been the best hospital painter; for I never drew a figure that was not lame or blind, and they had all something of the horrible in their countenances; and by the arching of their eye-brows, and the opening their mouths, they looked so

frightened, you would have thought they had seen their own faces in the glass.

I told my papa what you said of him. He says he will answer all your accusations in a north-west wind; what your Grace says of the easterly wind is very just. For my part I think he need not trouble himself about the wind, for his shape is as little of the camelion's as any one's: he does not look as if he lived upon air.

I am very sorry I have made so very free with your cousin, but how could I imagine any person who was neither handsome nor agreeable, was your relation! I dare say she is a very distant one; had she been within four or five degrees, she must have been both; but I am sure she must be eight or ten off before she could be neither. I believe Miss D——— and her Fubbsey are now one flesh, or rather one fat.

I am,

your Grace's most obedient servant,

ELIZABETH ROBINSON.

To the Same.

Mount Morris, September 4th, 1736.

MADAM,

I HAVE been racking my brains for an excuse for my negligence in not answering your Grace's agreeable letter; but I find my offence so much beyond the power of apology, that I want no less than your own good humour to excuse it; and I think I cannot give a greater proof of my opinion of it, than by relying wholly upon it for my pardon. And now I will suppose your Grace gives me a smile: and upon that I will proceed with my letter, as supposing myself excused, and forgiven. I shall give you the best account I can of the time I have spent since I wrote last to you: I was near five weeks at Tunbridge, and returned just time enough for the races at Canterbury. But in the order of things, I should first speak of Tunbridge; and I will mention the part of the company I imagine best known to your Grace, viz. the Dutchesses

of Norfolk and Richmond, Lord and Lady Litchfield, Lord and Lady Tilney, and their family, Lord and Lady Augustus Fitzroy, and Lord Stanhope and Lady Lucy, and Lord and Lady Peterborough, and Lord Paisley, and Lady Dillon, and Mr. and Mrs. Southwell; Lord V——— came a little before I left the Wells. What a ridiculous thing it was to swear the peace against that animal! How timorous must her Ladyship be, if he could put her in fear of her life! He danced at the ball, but with a gravity of countenance, and solemnity of gait, that showed the dance was only in his toes, and never reached his heart. Had she prudence and good nature, though his understanding might not make them happy, they might at least be easy. Not to be miserable is all some people are capable of. There want not only virtues, but a thousand little accomplishments to make married people entirely happy; I know why they are very often not happy, but your Grace knows why they are, by experience; and that is the sure way of judging. I

think if there were not better representatives of the married state than the thin melancholy countenance of Lord V——, the words "for better for worse," which have but a bad sound, would soon be out of use. I don't know whether it proceeds from the dullness of the weather, or the subject, but I am almost asleep, so I must change my conversation from matrimony to a ball. You know some of our Grub-street wits compared marriage to a country dance, which scheme I extremely approved, but when I read it, I thought it should have been set to the tune of "Love for ever;" but they say it never did go to that tune, nor ever would. I danced twice a week all the while I was at Tunbridge; and once extraordinary; for Lord Euston came down to see Lord Augustus Fitzroy, and made a ball. Lord Euston danced with the Dutchess of Norfolk; but her Grace went home early; and then Lord Euston danced with Lady Delves. We all left off about one o'clock. The day after I left the Wells I went to the races, which began on Monday, and

ended on Thursday, and I came home yesterday. On Monday there was an assembly again, and on Thursday another play; and as soon as that was over a private ball, where we had ten couple. Lord Crawford and Lord Rothes were at the races. The person most noticed for singularity at Tunbridge was Lord ——: he is always making mathematical scratches in his pocket-book, so that one half of the people took him for a conjuror. He is much admired and commended by his acquaintance, which are few in number I think he had three at the Wells, and I believe he did not allow them above a sentence a piece in a whole day, the rest he left Lady L—— to say, who, I believe, does not acquit herself ill of the office of spokeswoman. She seems to be very good natured, sensible, and of a more communicative temper than his lordship.

I am, Madam,

Your Grace's, &c.

E. Robinson.

To Mrs. Anstey.

Mount Morris, near Hythe, July 15th.

DEAR MADAM,

I AM much ashamed that I did not fulfil my promise of writing to you as soon as you went into Essex, but I was then in all the hurry of London diversions; and for want of leisure, not inclination, to write, was obliged to defer it till my coming into the country. I have been here about a fortnight, in which I have been a good deal engaged in making and receiving visits. Yesterday I was overturned coming from a neighbour's. We got no hurt at all, but were forced to borrow a coach to bring us the rest of the way, our own being quite disabled with the fall. If my right finger and thumb had not been necessary to me to write to you, I believe in the fright I should have been glad to have given them to have insured the rest of me. I always think one visits in the country at the hazard of

ones bones, but fear is never so powerful with me as to make me stay at home, and the next thing to being retired is, to be morose: contemplation is not made for a woman on the right side of thirty, it suits prodigiously well with the gout or the rheumatism; rest and an elbow chair are the comforts of age, but the pleasures of youth are of a more lively sort. I have in winter gone eight miles to dance to the music of a blind fiddler, and returned at two o'clock in the morning mightily pleased that I had been so well entertained. I am so fond of dancing, that I cannot help fancying I was at some time bit by a tarantula, and never got well cured of it. I shall this year lose my annual dancings at Canterbury races, for my papa had made a resolution (I assure you without my advice) not to go to them; they are to begin on Wednesday. The entertainments are, two assemblies and a play; there is but little company expected this year. I would have contributed as much as I could towards the ball, had the higher powers ordained it;

but, alas! my father passed a negative upon my good intentions, and so obedience and staying at home is the only thing for a dutiful daughter; the place being but empty of company strengthens much the effort of duty, and makes obedience passive, else a good ball on one side, and a command on the other, raise mighty conflicts in one's breast; not indeed whether one shall obey, for that is inevitable, but whether one shall be pleased with it, which is not so determined. At present you may see I am not much disappointed, but how should I feel any chagrin while I write to you; it will be in your power to make up the loss of the races to me in my year's account of pleasure, by letting me hear frequently from you, till we meet again at the grand rendezvous of England. How happy should I be were I your neighbour! Did I know any body hereabouts that deserved you, I am sure I could never help proposing the match. I hope you will stay longer in town next year. I have not received a letter from you, and the

miscarrying of one of your letters, besides the loss of it, suspended our correspondence for two years. I hope we shall never again meet with such an interruption; I have the vanity to think we then loved one another extremely, but neither of us took the pains to say so, though the other would have been pleased to have heard it; I am sure I never ceased telling any body but yourself the friendship I had for you. I have few who have been so long my acquaintance as yourself, and therefore should be much concerned at the losing an esteem which has grown with me from, I believe, seven or eight years old, when I first loved you and your doll. I stayed at home that morning in expectation of your brother. I was not very well, and therefore could not come to you. I desire you would make my compliments to the Doctor and Mrs. Anstey; all here desire their services to you, in particular my sister and brother Robinson, who is returned from Bath much better in health than he was last year when he was at

Cambridge. I have left no room to subscribe myself

your obedient humble servant,

E. Robinson.

*To Mrs. Mary Anstey,**
Brinkley near Cambridge.

To the Dutchess of Portland.

October 15, 1738.

Madam,

Had I known so agreeable a letter had been upon the road to me, I should not have made my complaints to your Grace in the manner I did, nor did I know of Lady Anne's marriage when I wrote.

I believe your Grace will be surprized when I tell you Lady —— is endeavouring to drive away the spleen by keeping company with her country neighbours, which is indeed the case at present; her Ladyship made a ball at —— a few days ago, to which she did our family the

* This lady was sister to the Author of the Bath Guide.

honour to invite them, and as we were obeying her commands, and had got into the coach with our ball airs, and our dancing shoes, at five miles of our journey we came to a brook so swelled by the rain that it looked like a river, and the water, we were told, was up to the coach seat, and as I had never heard of any balls in the Elysian fields, and do not so much as know whether the ghosts of departed beaux wear pumps, I thought it better to reserve ourselves for the ridotto, than hazard drowning for this ball, and so turned back and went to Sir Windham Knatchbull's, whose family were hindered by the same water. For my part I could think of nothing but the ball; when any one asked me how I did, I cried tit for tat; and, when they bid me sit down, I answered Jack of the Green. A few days after the ball Lady T——bespoke a play at a town eight miles from us, and summoned us to it: and two of my brothers, my sister, and your humble servant, went according to her Ladyship's commands, and after the play the gentlemen invited

all the women to a supper at the inn, where we staid till two o'clock in the morning, and then all set out for our respective homes. Here, I suppose, you will think my diversion ended, but I must tell your Grace it did not; for before I had gone two miles I had the pleasure of being overturned, at which I squalled for joy; and to complete my felicity, I was obliged to stand half an hour in the most refreshing rain, and the coolest north breeze I ever felt; for the coach braces breaking were the occasion of our overturn, and there was no moving till they were mended. You may suppose we did not lose so favourable an opportunity of catching cold; we all came croaking down to breakfast the next morning, and said we had caught no cold, as one always says when one has been scheming, but I think I have scarce recovered my treble tones yet.

We had seven coaches at the play: there was Lord Winchilsea, Lady Charlotte Finch, Lady Betty F——, Capt. Fielding, his lady and Miss Palmer; Mr. F——

and Miss Molly Palmer caught such colds they sent for a physician the next day; Lady Knatchbull and Miss K—— have kept their beds ever since; poor Lady T—— was overturned as she went home, and caught a terrible hoarseness, which was the better for the poor coachman, who by that means escaped a sharp and shrill reproof; and indeed it is enough for any poor man to lie under the terror of her frowns; with a look she can wound, with a frown she can kill. I think I never saw so formidable a countenance: in short, her smiles are like the sunshine and rain in an April day; she smiles and frowns together, which make a beautiful contrast in her visage. Lady Mary T—— has a little of her ladyship's sweetness in her countenance. I think Lord T——'s education of his son is something particular; he encourages him in swearing, and singing nasty ballads with the servants; he is a very fine boy, but prodigiously rude; he came down to breakfast the other day when there was company, and his maid came with him, who instead of carrying

a Dutch toy, or a little whirligig for his Lordship to play with, was lugging in a huge billet for his plaything; his diversions are all of the manly kind, which make him very strong, but that qualification seems more necessary for a porter than a man of quality. There was a fine supper at the ball. My eldest brother got out of the coach and put on a pair of boots, and rode on to the ball, when we turned back; he told me Lord T—— danced with Lady Betty F——, and Lord W—— with Lady T——; it puts one in mind of the anthem, "The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like young sheep." My papa has been two days at Lord T——'s; he comes to us at Sir Edward Dering's to-morrow, and then leaves H——. We are to have another ball or two at a gentleman's house, when the moon shines, which has a great influence upon us Kentish people. I am afraid Lord T—— will be gone before it comes to our turn to have a ball; we certainly show a spirit above the little accidents of life, not to be discouraged by these

disasters in our first undertaking, but proceed, hoarse as we are, in our diversions. Lord Winchilsea has ceased his douceurs to Miss Palmer, which I was sorry for; I always think a languishing swain of forty (next to a credulous virgin of thirty years old) the most diverting sight in the world; Solomon said well when he said there was a time for all things; there is a time to sigh, and a time to smile, but a sigh in an old man is a groan, and the smile of an old maid a grin. There is a time to flatter, and a time to believe it; but there is a time when flattery is fulsome, and belief ridiculous; there is a time to ogle, and a time to look through spectacles, but to do both together is squinting through a glass; a moving, not a melting sight. I think all our sex can do for old men is to compassionate their pains, and pity them; indeed Lord Winchilsea is a very agreeable man, not too old to love, but of too discreet an age to whine; Miss Palmer is so pretty she may expect to be admired, but I would not have her always think what may be, is. I

believe your Grace thinks I have been hoarse, and bottled up my prate for this week, and am now taking an opportunity to send it to you, as it wants no voice to utter it in this way; my paper admonishes me to leave off, however disagreeable it may be.

I am, Madam,

your's, &c.

ELIZ. ROBINSON.

To the Same.

Hatch, 11th, 1738.

MADAM,

YOUR Grace's very entertaining letter was sent to me at Sir Wyndham Knatchbull's, where I have been about three weeks, and propose returning to Mount Morris in a few days. I am as angry as I dare be with your Grace, that you did not send any account of those charming fire-works, which I fancy were the prettiest things imaginable. I very much

approve your love of variety in trifles, and constancy in things of greater moment. I think you have great reason to call exchange robbery, though the common saying is to the contrary. For my part, who never saw one man that I loved, I scarce imagine I could be fond of a dozen, and come to that unreasonableness so ridiculously set forth in Hippolyto in the Tempest; at present I seldom like above six or eight at a time. I fancy in matrimony one finds variety in one, in the charming vicissitudes of

"Sometimes my plague, sometimes my darling;
"Kissing to-day, to-morrow snarling."

Then the surprising and sudden transformation of the obsequious and obedient lover to the graceful haughtiness and imperiousness of the commanding husband, must be so agreeable a metamorphosis as is not to be equalled in all Ovid's collection, where I do not remember a lamb's being transformed into a bear. Your Grace is much to be pitied who has never known the varieties I men-

tion, but has found all the sincerity of friendship, and complacency of a lover, in the same person; and I am sure my Lord Duke is a most miserable man who has found one person who has taken away that passion for change, which is the boast and happiness of so many people. Pray tell my Lord Dupplin that I never heard of a Viscount that was a prophet in my life. I assure you I am not going to tie the fast knot you mention; whenever I have any thoughts of it I shall acquaint your Grace with it, and send you a description of the gentleman, with his good qualities and faults in full length. At present I will tell you what sort of a man I desire, which is above ten times as good as I deserve; for gratitude is a great virtue, and I would have cause to be thankful. He should have a great deal of sense and prudence to direct and instruct me, much wit to divert me, beauty to please me, good humour to indulge me in the right, and reprove me gently when I am in the wrong; money enough to afford me more than I can want, and

as much as I can wish; and constancy to like me as long as other people do, that is, till my face is wrinkled by age, or scarred by the small pox; and after that I shall expect only civility in the room of love, for as Mrs. Clive sings,

"All I hope of mortal man,
"Is to love me whilst he can."

When I can meet all these things in a man above the trivial consideration of money, you may expect to hear I am going to change the easy tranquillity of mind I enjoy at present for a prospect of happiness; for I am, like Pygmalion, in love with a picture of my own drawing, but I never saw an original like it in my life; I hope when I do, I shall, as some poet says, find the statue warm.

I am, Madam,

your most obedient humble servant,

ELIZ. ROBINSON.

To the Same.

Dec. 17, 1738.

MADAM,

YOUR Grace's most welcome, and very circumstantial letter, ought to have been acknowledged long ago, but the surprising and entertaining incidents so frequent at Bulstrode, are so scarce at Mount Morris, that it is hardly possible to amass a parcel of circumstances together. Here we sleep with our forefathers, and all the acts that we do, which are to eat, drink, sleep, and die, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles! As a want of business at home gives one great leisure to look after other people's, I must take the liberty to advise what is to be done in the cases you mention.

I heard a very ridiculous story a few days ago: Mr. Page, brother to Sir Gregory, going to visit Mr. Edward Walpole, a tame goat which was in the street followed him unperceived when he got out

of the coach into the house; Mr. Walpole's servaut thinking the goat came out of Mr. Page's coach, carried them into the room to Mr. Walpole, who thought it a little odd Mr. Page should bring such a visitor, as Mr. Page no less admired at his choice of so savoury a companion; but civility, a great disguiser of sentiments, prevented their declaring their opinions; and the goat, no respecter of persons or furniture, began to rub himself against the frame of a chair which was carved and gilt, and the chair, which was fit for a Christian, but unable to bear the shock of a beast, fell almost to pieces. Mr. Walpole thought Mr. Page very indulgent to his dear crony goat, and wondering he took no notice of the damage, said he fancied that tame goats did a great deal of harm, to which the other said he believed so too; at last, after much free easy behaviour of the goat, to the great detriment of the furniture, they came to an explanation, and Mr. Goat was turned down-stairs with very little ceremony or good manners.

I do not know whether your Grace has heard that Lord Castlemain and Mr. Child took their horses, and went out of a frolic, and robbed a taylor who had just received a large sum of Lord Tylney; and the taylor returning directly to my Lord T——, to tell his sad story to the servants, saw my Lord Castlemain ride into the yard; and said, not knowing his Lordship, that he was the man who robbed him. The servants, who were not privy to the frolic, laughed much at the taylor, who persisted in the story; and Mr. Child, while they were in this dispute, likewise came in, and the taylor said that was the other highwayman, and grew very clamorous. Lord Tylney enquired what noise he heard, which set the young gentlemen laughing so much that he insisted upon their acquainting him with the story; and they thinking they had carried it on far enough, told him the story, sending, as they intended, the money to the taylor, after having sufficiently frightened him. But the taylor, who recovered his spirits with his

money, insisted upon 50l. as a recompense for silence upon a subject that did not do much honour to the adventurers. I must say I was much surprized to hear Lord Castlemain was concerned in so manly an exploit; he smells so sweet, and talks so like a waiting gentlewoman, I should never have suspected him to be able to put even a taylor in fear of his life. Lady T—— has set an assembly on foot about eight miles from hence, where we all meet at the full moon and dance till twelve o'clock, and then take an agreeable journey home. Our assembly, in full glory, has ten coaches at it; and Lady T——, to make up a number, is pleased, in her humility, to call in all the parsons, apprentices, tradesmen, apothecaries, and farmers, milliners, mantua-makers, haberdashers of small wares, and chambermaids. It is the oddest mixture you can imagine; here sails a reverend parson, there skips an airy apprentice, here jumps a farmer, and then every one has an eye to their trade; the milliner pulls you by the hand till she tears your

glove; the mantua-maker treads upon your petticoat till she unrips the seams; the shoemaker makes you foot it till you wear out your shoes; the mercer dirties your gown; the apothecary opens the window behind you that you may be sick; and the parson calls out for Joan Saunderson. Most of our neighbours will be in town by the next moon, so we shall have no more balls this winter. In town the ladies talk of their stars, but here

> If weak women go astray,
> The moon is more in fault than they.

Will-o'wisp never led the bewildered traveller over hedge and ditch as a moon does us country gentlefolks; a squeaking fiddle is an occasion, and a moonlight night an opportunity to go ten miles in bad roads at any time. I must tell your Grace that my papa forgets twenty years and nine children, and dances as nimbly as any of the quorum; but is now and then mortified by hearing the ladies cry, "Old Mr. Robinson! Hay sides and turn your daughter;" other ladies who have a

mind to appear young say, "Well! there is my poor grand papa, he could no more dance so!" Then comes an old batchelor of fifty, and shakes him by the hand, and cries, "Why, you dance like one of us young fellows;" another, more injudicious than the rest, says by way of compliment, "Who would think you had six fine children taller than yourself? I protest if I did not know you I should take you to be young;" then says the most antiquated virgin in the company, "Mr. Robinson wears mighty well; my mother says he looks as well as ever she remembers him; he used to come often to the house when I was a girl." You may suppose he has not the hyp at these balls; but indeed it is a distemper so well bred as never to come but when people are at home and at leisure; I think I have the pleasure of observing his health to mend every day, and I am of opinion with the spinster's mother, that he never looked better.

I have not heard any thing of Lady Austin since her wedding; Sir Robert

had an apoplectic fit at Sir Philip Boteler's a little before they married; Sir Philip is so fond of him and his lady, that it is thought he will leave him some part of his estate, which is very considerable. I don't know from whence the friendship arises; there may indeed be a sympathy in the souls of Sir Philip and Sir Robert, but there never was less resemblance of body. Sir Robert Austin's shadow, by moonlight, would make a dozen of the other. The apothecary in Caius Marius is a corpulent man in comparison of him. I cannot describe him to your Grace, a shadow is too material, and a skeleton too fat.—Charon will not ask half his fare to waft him over Styx, for he will take up no room in the boat; Pluto will make him his prime minister, and Proserpine will take him for her husband's relation. He is really the grim king of the ghosts; he will be president of the court of Death. His wife and he are literally but one flesh, for she has all the flesh herself. But why should the fat and lean equally torment your Grace? I know

if I was to undertake to describe her, I could never bring her circumference within my sheet of paper. For once, she shall come into a narrow compass, for I think now compassion is due to you, and I will, for your sake, let Lady Boteler grow a little fatter. It is two o'clock; I sat up after every body was gone to bed on purpose to write you this letter. "Sleepless myself, to give my readers sleep;" I assure your Grace it is no small pleasure to me to think that you may get as good a nap by my letter as I have lost by it. I beg my compliments to his Grace. I could describe Lady Boteler in much less compass than I could tell you how much I am your Grace's obedient servant,

ELIZ. ROBINSON.

To the Same.

Mount Morris, 1738.

MADAM,

YOUR Grace's lively description of the pleasures of the Town, made me rejoice that one so sensible and deserving of its diversions should have so large a share of them. But I envy and grudge the opportunities to those drowsy mortals who can sleep on a ridotto night, nod in their chimney the first night of a new play, and never dream of drawing rooms, &c. They should live at Mount Morris. You say you suppose I have no spirits left, but alas! that is not the case; I have much prate, which is of no use but to talk to the echo, a nymph of no invention or reply, and though never silent in my company, never diverting. Were things as in Esop's days, when beasts could talk, the country might be a place of conversation; a jay might flutter about like a beau, a nightingale sing an opera song, a calf talk like a squire's eldest son, a

stately ox be as grave a companion as the chairman of the bench of justices, a bull roar like a patriot senator, a sheep whine like a lover, and dame Partlet be as polite in conversation as a notable housewife, Jowler might bark scandal, Finder hunt out secret history, and a greyhound run down a weak reputation. But if these metamorphoses cannot be compassed, it is very common to see the reverse of my scheme; though I never saw a calf a direct young squire, I have seen many an heir apparent a very calf, and so of the rest. Pray, Madam, if you meet with any of my animals upon two legs, advise them to take to all fours and people woods, not crowd cities. They had better live in the country where they are respected, than in town where they are laughed at; and I observe here nobody laughs at what they say but themselves. I have heard a definition of man, that he is a risible animal, and suppose therefore these sort of gentlemen laugh only to prove they are of the honourable species: for it would be barbarous to imagine they

laughed all their lives without a reason, as without a jest. I assure you nothing but deafness can make my papa forget London, for I take care to make honourable mention of that noble city once a day at least; but my unwearied diligence in asking questions, cannot yet bring me to the knowledge of the time fixed for our departure, but it will be in March; I shall conjure him to come up by the second ridotto; one of those charming assemblies is too much to lose. I hope your Grace will have leisure to bestow upon your humble servant, while she is in town, that I may have the satisfaction of enjoying the most agreeable company in the pleasantest place. You are very good to say you will write to me. I hope the young marquis, and the little ladies are well. My best respects attend my Lord Duke. My papa, and mamma, and sister, beg their compliments.

I am, Madam,

your Grace's most obedient servant,

ELIZABETH ROBINSON.

To the Same.

Horton, Dec. 1738.

MADAM,

I THINK I cannot possibly show a greater regard to your Grace's commands, than by obeying them in the strictest sense; therefore as you desired me to write to you soon, I have written the soonest that was possible.

I arrived at Mount Morris rather more fond of society than solitude. I thought it no very agreeable change of scene from Handel and Gaffarelli, to woodlarks and nightingales; it seems to me to be something like the different seasons of youth and age; first, noise and public shew, and then after being convinced that is vanity, retirement to shades and solitude, which we soon find to be vexation of spirit. I think Solomon was in the wrong when he said all was vanity and vexation of spirit, he ought to have said all was vanity or vexation of spirit; for the one succeeds the other, as darkness does light,

and especially in the women; the young maid is all vanity, and the old one all vexation. The same cheek which when blooming was the woman's vanity, when wrinkled becomes her vexation; but every thing has its use; were it not for wrinkles, what prudent maxims should we lose which now instruct us? What scandal which diverts us? for old maids have nothing to do but to shew their own prudence and other people's follies. You see how sententious I am grown only by a fortnight's retirement from the world. When the world has left me I shall speak only in proverbs, for if these things are done in a green tree what shall be done in a dry? Sir F. Dashwood's sister is to be married to Sir Robert Austin, a Baronet of our country; if the size of his estate bore any proportion to the bulk of his carcass, he would be one of the greatest matches in England, but unhappily for her the first is as remarkably small as the other is large; so all she is to get for six thousand pounds is a fat man, a lean estate, and a trumpery title. Indeed a

lady may make her lover languish till he is of the size she most likes; if she should waste him an ell in circumference, he would be almost as slim a man as Sir John Cotton. At present you would take him for a descendant of Gog and Magog. As it is not now the fashion for men to die for love, the only thing a woman can do to give herself a reputation, is to bring a man into a consumption. What triumph then must attend the lady who reduces Sir R. Austin to asses milk! Queen Omphale made Hercules spin, but greater glory awaits the lady who makes Sir R. Austin lean.

I hope your Grace will favour me with a letter soon; to write to you from hence, would be extremely like Swift's country post of news from the hen roost. I told my papa how much he laid under your Grace's displeasure for hurrying out of town; but what is a fine lady's anger, or the loss of London to five and forty! They are more afraid of an easterly wind than a frown when they are of that age. My mamma and sister desire their com-

pliments. I hope the Marquis of Titchfield is well.

I am, Madam,
your most humble servant,
ELIZ. ROBINSON.

To the Same.

—— 1738.

MADAM,

As your Grace tenders my peace of mind you will be glad to hear I am not so angry as I was. I own I was much moved in spirit at hearing you neglected your health, but since you have had advice, there is one safe step taken. As for me, I have swallowed the weight of an apothecary in medicine, and what I am the better, except more patient and less credulous, I know not. I have learnt to bear my infirmities, and not to trust to the skill of physicians for curing them. I endeavour to drink deep of philosophy, and to be wise when I cannot be merry,

easy when I cannot be glad, content with what cannot be mended, and patient where there is no redress. The mighty can do no more, and the wise seldom do as much. You see I am in the main content with myself, though many would quarrel with such an insignificant, idle, inconsistent person; but I am resolved to make the best of all circumstances around me, that this short life may not be half lost in pains, "well remembering and applying, the necessity of dying." Between the periods of birth and burial I would fain insert a little happiness, a little pleasure, a little peace: to-day is ours, yesterday is past, and to-morrow may never come. I wonder people can so much forget death, when all we see before us is but succession; minute succeeds to minute, season to season, summer dies as winter comes. The dial marks the change of hour, every night brings death-like sleep, and morning seems a resurrection; yet while all changes and decays, we expect no alteration, unapt to live, unready to die, we lose the present

and seek the future, ask much for what we have not, thank Providence but little for what we have; our youth has no joy, our middle age no quiet, our old age no ease, no indulgence; ceremony is the tyrant of this day, fashion of the other, business of the next. Little is allowed to freedom, happiness, and contemplation, the adoration of our Creator, the admiration of his works, and the inspection of ourselves. But why should I trouble your Grace with these reflections. What my little knowledge can suggest you must know better: what my short experience has shown, you must have better observed. I am sure any thing is more acceptable to you than news and compliments, so I always give your Grace the present thoughts of my heart. I beg my compliments to Lady Oxford, who I hope is better.

I am, Madam,
your Grace's most obedient servant,
E. Robinson.

To the Same.

Mount Morris, July 18th, 1739.

MADAM,

THE great art of life is to turn our misfortunes to our advantage, and to make even disappointments instrumental to our pleasures; to follow which rule I have taken the day in which I should have gone to the races, to write to your Grace. About ten days ago my papa made an hypocondriacal resolution not to go to the races, for the vapours and love are two things which seek solitude; but for me who have neither in my constitution, a crowd is not disagreeable, and I always find myself prompted by a natural benevolence and love of society, to go where two or three are gathered together. The very name of assembly has its charms for me, that of a ball carries still a further attraction in it; but as I can employ the time in writing to you, I can easily determine I have not lost any pleasure, by asking myself a few questions. If I had

seen a thousand people, is there any one whose company I should value like the Dutchess of Portland's, or could the whole together make one half so complete? to which I answer most sincerely, no. In spite of the love of gadding, I shall be brought to confess that at home, with an inexhaustible ink bottle, an indefatigable pen, and an unlimited sheet of paper, I have the means of the greatest happiness your absence will allow. Surely these things will outweigh the irrational pleasure of jumping and cutting capers. The theory of dancing is extremely odd, though the practice is agreeable? Who could by force of reasoning find out the satisfaction of casting off, right hand and left, and the hayes; we often ignorantly laugh to see a kitten turning round in pursuit of its own tail, when the creature is only turning single. I shall have an account of the races from my brother Robinson, who is there; as for the barrister, he came down to the sessions, and when he had sold all his law, packed up his saleable eloquence, and carried it

back to Lincoln's Inn, there to be left till called for. Would you think a person so near akin to me as a brother could run away from a ball? I hear some Canterbury girls, who could aspire no higher than to a younger brother, are very angry, and say they shall never put their cause into his hands, as he seems so little willing to defend it; I am much afraid he will never again be in the remitter of their grace: I am inclined to think he never designs to dance again till he is made a serjeant. Lord and Lady Rockingham are to be at the head of affairs this year. They will look like ambassadors from Lilliput and Brobdingnag to the Corporation of Canterbury. There is always a play the night after the assembly. If I can guess Lady R——'s taste she will bespeak Tom Thumb, with the humours of the little puppet Nibble Biscuit. Next year we must certainly go to the races for the good of our country, and I shall dance to either a Whig or a Tory tune, as it happens, for I am not like dancing monkeys who will only cut their capers for King

George. I will dance for any man or monarch in Christendom; nay, were it even a Mahomedan or idolatrous king, I should not make much scruple of it. I had the misfortune to be overturned the other day in coming from Sir Wyndham Knatchbull's; and I assure you I but just avoided the indecency of being topsy turvy; my head was so much lower than its usual situation, that it has left my ideas in a perfect litter ever since. Many material things in my memory are laid aside, and all those of consequence (if ever there were any) are missing; but I dare say they are there still, for I am sure I have uttered none of them. I shall begin to think, from my frequent overturns, a bone-setter a necessary part of equipage for country visiting. I am sure those who visit much, love their neighbours better than themselves. Perhaps you will be as apt to suspect me as any body of that extreme of charity, but I am so tender of myself, there are few for whom out of choice I would hazard even a gristle or a sinew; but civility is a debt

which must be paid. I hope in all accidents I shall preserve a finger and a thumb to write myself your Grace's

most obedient,

and most obliged humble servant,

E. Robinson.

To the Same.

Canterbury, August 15, 1739.

Madam,

I hope the writing faculty will be restored again to your Grace in a few days. for I never stood more in need of such a consolation. I am at present banished from home by the small-pox. On Saturday a woman and three children, who live in a farm-house at our gate, fell ill of it, which so much frightened my very good and tender mamma, that my papa sent my sister and myself directly to Canterbury, where we shall stay a week with Mrs. Scott, and then go to Mrs. T——, the wife of a prebend of this

church. I do not much like a country town; there is little company except deans, prebends, and minor canons. We have met with a great deal of civility, and have nothing but messages and visits from prebends, deacons, and the rest of the church militant here on earth. In short the whole town takes to me so much that I am sure they would choose me member of Parliament, if I would offer myself as a candidate. I think I shall be tired of the study of divines, before our pestilential neighbours are well again. To my unspeakable grief my brother Robinson will not be persuaded to avoid the danger. I heard lately that Mr. Dashwood was dead at Rome. I hope it was not Miss Dashwood's brother, for an addition of fortune, which comes by the loss of a friend, is always far from welcome. I have seven brothers, and would not part with one for a kingdom; and if I had but one I should be distracted about him; but, thanks to fortune, I am plentifully provided with them; surely no one has so many or so good brothers. Three of them

intend seeing me to-morrow, and will stay here two or three days. I have written a line to the Duke; I hope the feminine hand will not hurt his reputation. I never wrote before a letter to a gentleman which was not read with spectacles; but it will be necessary for me to bespeak some younger correspondent for fear of losing my old ones the first hard winter. I think there are some of them that could not bear a long frost. If I did not always write ill I should make some excuse for this letter; my pen has been an ancient inhabitant of the standish, it has defaced much white paper, and been long the engine of industry and the secretary of diligence. It has given flight to as much foolishness, as when it was in the wing of a goose, but it sings its last so melodiously one would imagine it was taken from a swan; it shall however, ere I consign it to ignoble rest, sign myself

your Grace's very humble servant,

E. Robinson.

To the Same.

Mount Morris, October 10, 1739.

MADAM,

IT is extremely good of your Grace to continue to make me happy at a time when I can neither see you nor hear from you. I should have written upon my leaving Lady Knatchbull's, but the country and the head-ach are certainly the worst correspondents, as well as the dullest companions in the world. I have promised continually to trouble you no more, having exhausted all my epistolary matter, but I cannot help expressing my gratitude to my Lord Duke, who is certainly a person of indefatigable good nature. I hope soon to have the pleasure of seeing you in my way to Bath, and beg you will give orders to your porter to admit me, for if not, as I am grown thin since my indisposition, he will think it is my ghost, and shut the door; and if you should afterwards read in your visiting book, Miss Robinson from the shades

below, you will guess the meaning of it; but remember I am not going to be dipt in Lethe, but the Bath water. I shall stay but a few days in town, and then shall proceed with my father and mother to the waters of life and recovery. My papa's chimney corner hyp will never venture to attack him in a public place: it is the sweet companion of solitude, and the offspring of meditation, the disease of an idle imagination, not the child of hurry and diversion. I am afraid that, with the gaieties of the place, and the spirits the waters give, I shall be perfect *sal volatile*, and open my mouth and evaporate. I wish you and his Grace much comfort, and Lady Bell much joy upon the occasion of her marriage. I imagine she only waits for the writings. Lawyers, who live by delay, do not consider it is often the death of love. They would rather break an impatient lover's heart than make a flaw in the writings. Then they think of the jointure, and separation of the turtles, who think they can never part from, or survive each other; at last

they are convinced they loved, but the lawyer reasoned. Your Grace, by experience, knows what makes matrimony happy; from observation I can tell what makes it miserable. But I can define matrimonial happiness only like wit, by negatives; 'tis not kissing that's too sweet, 'tis not scolding that's too sour, 'tis not raillery that's too bitter, nor the continual shuttlecock of reply, for that's too tart. In short, I hardly know how to season it to my taste: but I would neither have it tart, nor mawkishly sweet. I should not like to live upon metheglin or verjuice; and then for that agreeable variety of sometimes my plague, sometimes my darling, it would be worse than anything; for recollection would never suffer one either entirely to love them when good, or hate them when bad. I believe your Grace will easily suppose I am not a little pleased at escaping the stupidity of a winter in the country. I have heard people speak with comfort of being as merry as a cricket, but for my part I do not find the joy of being cohabitant of

the fire side with them. I am in very good spirits here, and should be so were I in a desert; I borrow from the future the happiness I expect, and from the past, by recollection, bring it back to the present. I can sit and live over those hours I past so pleasantly with you when I was in town, and in hope enjoy those I may have the pleasure of passing with you again. I was a month at Hatch, where the good humour of the family makes every thing agreeable; we had great variety in the house: children in cradles, and old women in elbow chairs. I think the family may be looked upon like the three tenses, the present, past, and future. I am very glad to hear the Marquis and the little ladies are well; I beg my compliments to his Grace. The hour for ghosts to rest is come, so I must vanish; I shall appear again in a white sheet of paper e'er long; but what can I write from a place where I know nothing but that I am,

your Grace's humble servant,

E. Robinson.

To the Same.

——— 1739.

MADAM,

As I always acquaint your Grace with my motions from place to place, I think it incumbent upon me to let you know I died last Thursday; having that day expected to hear of a certain dutchess, and being disappointed, I fell into a vexation, and from thence into a chagrin, and from that into a melancholy, with a complicated et cetera, and so expired, and have since crossed the Styx, though Charon was loath to receive me into the boat. Pluto enquired into the cause of my arrival, and upon telling him it, he said, *that* lady had sent many lovers there by her cruelty, but I was the first friend who was dispatched by her neglect. I thought it proper to acquaint you with my misfortune, and therefore called for the pen and ink Mrs. Rowe had used to write her letters from the dead to the living, and consulted with the melancholy lovers you

had sent there before me, what I should say to you.—One was for beginning, Obdurate Fair, one for addressing you in metre, another in metaphor; but I found these lovers so sublime a set of ghosts, that their advice was of no service to me, so I applied to the other inhabitants of Erebus. I went to Ixion for counsel, but his head was so giddy with turning, he could not give me a steady opinion; Sisyphus was so much out of breath with walking up hill he could not make me an answer. Tantalus was so dry he could not speak to be understood; and Prometheus had such a gnawing at his stomach he could not attend to what I said. Presently after I met Eurydice, who asked me if I could sing a tune, for Pluto had a very good ear, and I might release her for ever, for though

> "Fate had fast bound her
> With Styx nine times round her,
> Yet singing a tune was victorious."

I told her I had no voice, but that there was one Lady Wallingford in the other

world, who could sing and play like her own Orpheus, but that I hoped she would not cóme thither a great while. The fatal sisters said they had much fine thread to spin for her yet, and so Madam Eurydice must wait with patience. Charon says the packet boat is ready, and ghosts will not wait, so I must take my leave of you to my great grief; for, as Bays in the Rehearsal says, ghosts are not obliged to speak sense, I could have added a great deal more. Pluto gives his service, and Proserpine is your humble servant. We live here very elegantly, we dine upon essence like the Duke of Newcastle; we eat and drink the soul and spirit of every thing; we are all thin and well shaped, but what most surprised me was to see Sir Robert Austin,* who arrived here when I did, a perfect shadow; indeed I was not so much amazed that he had gone the way of all flesh, as to meet him in the state of all spirit. At first I took him for Sir ————————, his cousin, but upon hearing him say how many ton he was

* A very fat man.

shrunk in circumference, I easily found him out. I shall wait patiently till our packet wafts me a letter from your Grace; being now divested of passion, I can, as a ghost, stay a post or two under your neglect, though flesh and blood could not bear it. All that remains of me is

your faithful shade,

E. Robinson.

P. S. Pray lay up my letter where it cannot hear the cock crow, or it will vanish, having died a maid. There are a great many apes who were beaux in your world, and I have a promise of three more who made a fine figure at the last birth-day, but cannot outlive the winter.

Written from Pluto's palace by darkness visible.

To the Same.

Bath, Dec. 27, 1740.

MADAM,

AFTER four days journey, in very bad roads, I arrived here a good deal tired. If Scarron had not been very facetious, my countenance had not received the impression of a smile since I left Whitehall till my arrival at Bath. I read most of the way, but was sometimes taken off le petit Ragotin's disasters, to fear those that might happen to la petite Fidget.* If happiness, as it is said, is by comparison, how miserable must I be after leaving your Grace, and those agreeable friends by whom you are always surrounded, to come here to the assembly of invalids! The morning after I arrived, I went to the Ladies' Coffee House, where I heard of nothing but the rheumatism in the

* A name given to her by the Dutchess of Portland, and her friends, on account of the activity of her mind and body.

shoulder, the sciatica in the hip, and the gout in the toe. I began to fancy myself in the hospital or infirmary, I never saw such an assembly of disorders. I dare say Gay wrote his fable of the Court of Death from this place. The waters employ the morning, visits the afternoon, and we saunter away the evening in great stupidity. I think no place can be less agreeable; How d'ye do? is all one hears in the morning, and What is trumps? in the afternoon. Lady Berkshire did us the honour of a visit on Wednesday, and enquired much after your health. Lord B—— is, literally speaking, laid by the leg, which the gout has usurped, for it has ever been a distemper of great quality, and runs in the best blood. Mrs. H—— and Mr. T. H—— are here, as are Mrs. Greville and her daughter; Lady Hereford, Lady F. Shirley, Dutchess of Norfolk, &c. As for the men, except Lord Noel Somerset, they are altogether abominable; there is not one good, no not one; however such as they are, I

must dress for the ball, and I will add a supplement to-morrow.

P. S. You know the Spectator says, a woman never speaks her mind but in the postscript, if so this letter will be very sincere, as I am setting forward to send you a sheet of postscript, if I can fill it; but last night produced nothing but some bad dancing, and the arrival of Mr. Southwell. Lady Bab and Mr. Mansell are come down, but they have not yet been in the Rooms. I believe there is a great circulation of company, for the bells are always ringing for somebody come, or tolling for somebody gone. There are many people whom I have known and seen before, but very few whom I care to see again. One person whom I like extremely, loves her husband so much better than me, that I cannot persuade her to come out. I believe your Grace has often heard me speak of Mrs. Freind; she is not like her brother Sir Thomas. What makes me like her still better is her

great contempt for matadors. I do not believe she ever dreamt of spadille in her life, though most people here prefer its company to that of their best friends. I beg your Grace will make my compliments to my Lord Duke, and to Lady Wallingford, to whom I will write soon. A letter from your Grace will be very charitable. I know you have better diversions than writing, but I have no pleasure any where so great as that of assuring your Grace that

I am, Madam,

your Grace's most obedient servant,

ELIZABETH ROBINSON.

To the Same.

Bath, Jan. 4, 1740.

MADAM,

As a whole fortnight has elapsed without your Grace's bestowing any new favour upon me, I really believe you have

entirely forgotten there is a forlorn Fidget in the world; I can hardly say she lives, while she is so far from you; but she eats, drinks, sleeps, coughs, and sneezes, which are all the signs of life some people have, and indeed is very nearly as much alive as any body here. I wish your Grace would consider Bath water is not Helicon, and affords no inspiration; and that there is no place where one stands in greater need of something to enliven the brain and inspire the imagination. I hear every day of people's pumping their arms or legs for the rheumatism, but the pumping for wit is one of the hardest and most fruitless labours in the world. I should be glad to send you some news, but all the news of the place would be like the bills of mortality, palsy. four; gout, six; fever, one, &c. &c. We hear of nothing but Mr. Such-a-one is not abroad to-day; Oh! no, says another, poor gentleman, he died to-day. Then another cries, my party was made for quadrille to-night, but one of the gentlemen has had a second stroke of the palsy, and cannot

come out; there is no depending upon people, no body minds engagements. Indeed the only thing one can do to-day, we did not do the day before, is to die; not that I would be hurried by a love of variety and novelty to do so irreparable a thing as dying. To shew you how loath I am even to dance a step towards it, I will tell your Grace, that I staid away last night from the ball, because I had a cold. I shall always be glad to live while I can see you. I do not expect to see such another, for that might require the age of an antediluvian.

I am, Madam,

your Grace's most obedient servant,

E. Robinson.

To the Same.

Bath, Jan. 7, 1740.

MADAM,

THE pleasure your Grace's letter gave me, convinced me that happiness can reach one at Bath, though I think it is not an inhabitant of the place. I pity your confinement with the reverend assembly you mentioned. It is very unreasonable of people to expect one should be at home, because one is in the house. Of all privileges that of invisibility is the most valuable. Lord ——— was wheeled into the Rooms on Thursday night, where he saluted me with much snuff and civility, in consequence of which I sneezed and courtesied abundantly; as a farther demonstration of his loving kindness, he made me play at commerce with him. You may easily guess at the charms of a place where the heighth of my happiness is a pair royal at commerce, and a peer of threescore. Last night I took the more youthful diversion of dancing; our beaux

here may make a rent in a woman's fan, but they will never make a hole in her heart: for my part, Lord N. Somerset has made me a convert from toupets and pumps, to tie wigs and a gouty shoe. Ever since my Lord Duke reprimanded me for too tender a regard for Lord Craufurd's nimble legs, I have resolved to prefer the merit of the head to the agility of the heels; and I have made so great a progress in my resolution as to like the good sense which limps, better than the lively folly which dances. But to my misfortune he likes the queen of spades so much more than me, that he never looks off his cards, though were I queen of diamonds, he would stand a fair chance for me. I hope the Bath waters are as good for the gout in the heart as the gout in the stomach, or I shall be the worse for the journey. Lord Ailesford, Lady Ann Shirley, Lady S. Paulet, &c. &c. are here, Miss Greville, Miss Berkely, and Lady Hereford. Mr. Mansell came last night to the ball. We have the most diverting set of dancers, especially amongst the men; some hop

and some halt in a very agreeable variety. The dowager Dutchess of Norfolk bathes, and being very tall, had nearly drowned a few women in the Cross Bath, for she ordered it to be filled till it reached her chin, and so all those who were below her stature, as well as her rank, were forced to come out or drown; and finding it, according to the proverb, in vain to strive against the stream, they left the bath rather than swallow so large a draught of water. I am sorry for the cruel separation of your Grace and Miss Dashwood; I believe no one parts with their friends with greater reluctance than you do; and how they part with you I have a melancholy remembrance. I am of your opinion, that one may easily guess at the depth of an understanding whose shallows are never covered by silence. It is now pretty late, and I will end my scandalous chronicle of Bath. I beg my best compliments to my Lord Duke and to Lady Wallingford.

I am, Madam, &c.

E. Robinson.

To the Same.

Bath, Jan. 25, 1740.

MADAM,

As there is no mortal happiness without some allay, so in this worldly state of imperfection there is no affliction without its comfort; in this calamitous hour of being ill and staying away from a ball, I have the consolation of writing to your Grace. An unfortunate joint in my hip has been so troublesome, that I could scarcely finish my letter to Lady Wallingford. I could not believe the rheumatism would attack so dancing a leg, or that vivacity should be reduced to walk upon crutches; it has not proved according to my hopes, to which I listen more than to fears, as the pleasanter prophets of futurity. I should sooner have written to your Grace if I had any news to communicate. Except Lord Noel Somerset's match with Miss Berkeley, we have had no transactions of any consequence. I think Lord N's. wife must be happy, and

Miss B. is a very deserving woman, and good natured, and smiles with great seriousness and majesty. Lady Hereford is, all joy upon the occasion; Mr. B. seems pleased, and every body content, except those who would have liked the gentleman for themselves. If you know any such, you should send them a garland of the mournful willow that trembles over the brook. A man of merit and a younger brother is a purchase only for a great fortune: as for those who have more merit than wealth, they must turn the penny by disposing of their useless virtues for riches; the exchange may sometimes be difficult, virtues not being sterling, nor merit the current coin of the nation. However, it is possible to bring about the exchange; men of estates loving to buy curiosities they do not understand, fools every day buy sensible wives; and the worthless purchase merit because other people value it. Gold is the chief ingredient in the composition of worldly happiness. Living in a cottage on love is certainly the worst diet and the worst

habitation one can find out. As for modern marriages, they are great infringers of the baptismal vow; for 'tis commonly the pomps and vanities of this wicked world on one side, and the sinful lusts of the flesh on the other. For my part, when I marry, I do not intend to enlist entirely under the banners of Cupid or Plutus, but take prudent consideration, and decent inclination for my advisers. I like a coach and six extremely, but a strong apprehension of repentance would not suffer me to accept it from many that possess it. I had little acquaintance with ———, for I never run into Aaron's idolatry, nor could I ever bow the knee to Mammon. To say the truth, he is the god of our fathers, and the god of our mothers; as the Israelites made their children pass through the fire to Baal, there are few good Christians who would not make their children pass through misery to Mammon. However, I have said enough upon the subject, and will change my theme, and tell you in what state we are here. At the balls we have nine or ten

couple of tolerable dancers, most of them very stupid and ignorant, if you take them out of the only science they know, viz. that of dancing. There are several card tables, and I play sometimes at commerce in a set consisting of Miss Bulkeley, Miss Greville, Miss Cotton, the Miss Bathursts, Lady Widrington, and Mrs. Howard, and if we can get the Duke of Norfolk, we think ourselves well manned. As for the noble peer who was patron of the game, he has been confined a great while, so we sneeze no more. Miss Windsor, it is said, is to marry Mr. John Stanhope. I beg of your Grace to make my compliments to Mrs. Pendarvis, and return my sincere thanks for saying so much in my favour as could introduce me to so agreeable an acquaintance as her friend, Mrs. Donnellan, who made me very happy to-night by spending the evening with me; I assure you what she says gives pleasure, and what she sings delight. If my ears were always as well entertained with sense and music, I should think hearing the best of my senses, and

better than all put together. I beg your Grace to say all that is civil to Lady Wallingford and my Lord Duke for me. When you are at leisure to do an act of charity, pray write to

your most obedient humble servant,

E. Robinson.

To the Same.

Bath, Jan. 30, 1740.

Madam,

It is said expectation enhances the value of a pleasure. I think your letters want nothing to add to the satisfaction they give, and I would not have your Grace take the method of delay to give a zest to your favours: however, your letter did give me the greatest pleasure; I must have been sunk in insensibility if it had not made me happy. I have long been convinced it was in your power to give me happiness, and I shall begin to think

health too, for I have been much better ever since I received it. I hope the Duke is entirely well of his new disorder; I am sure his Grace will never have it much, for it is a distemper always accompanied by peevishness, and as he has not the smallest grain of that in his composition, he can never have a constitution troubled with the gout. What will this world come to now dutchesses drink gin and frequent fairs! I am afraid your gentlemen did not pledge you, or they might have resisted the frost and fatigue by the strength of that comfortable liquor. I want much to know whether your Grace got a ride in the flying coach, which is part of the diversion of a fair. I am much obliged to you for wishing me of the party, I should have liked it extremely. When you go again, pray beware of a thaw, lest you should meet with your final dissolution. Lady Berkshire, Mrs. Greville and her daughter, called upon me yesterday. Every body takes pity on me now I am confined so much. I am much obliged to your Grace

for forming schemes for me. If any castles come to my share, they must be airy ones, for I have no materials to build them on terra firma. I am not a good chimerical architect, and besides, I would rather dwell this summer in a small room in a certain noble mansion, near Gerrard's Cross, than in the most spacious building I could have. I shall not be troublesome to you in town, for our stay here will be so long, that our family will hardly go down till the end of May. I have many things to say which can be conveyed to your knowledge by no way but through your ear. The time will come that we shall meet at Philippi. Time, though swift, seems slow while its progress is towards our wishes: if I was at the old gentleman's elbow I should shake his hour glass to hasten the arrival of April. While I am impatient to see you, I cannot help wondering Dean Swift should think it an unreasonable thing for lovers to desire the gods to annihilate both space and time to make two lovers happy. For my part I have wished in the more reasonable passion of friendship

the loss of three months, and at least as many counties, that we might be together. If love, like faith, could remove mountains, you would see me with you by to morrow morning; except the humorous lieutenant, no one was ever so much in love with one of their own sex, as I am with your Grace. If I should ever be half as much enamoured of one of the other, what will become of me in this world,

> " Where sighs and tears are bought and sold,
> " And love is made but to be told ?"

While Hymen holds by Mammon's charter, my affections would assuredly be slighted, having nothing but myself in the scale, and some few vanities that make me light What is a woman without gold or fee simple? a toy while she is young, and a trifle when she is old. Jewels of the first water are good for nothing till they are set; but as for us, who are no brilliants, we are no body's money till we have a foil, and are encompassed with the precious metal. As for the

intrinsic value of a woman few know it, and nobody cares. Lord Foppington appraised all the female virtues, and bought them in under a 1000l. sterling, and the whole sex have agreed no one better understood the value of womankind. I admire the heroic exploits of the beaux at the playhouse; but could these Narcissus's break the looking glass and destroy the images of themselves! Beating the actors off the stage exceeded the valorous enterprize of Don Quixotte when he demolished the puppets. I hear one of the gentlemen *(fortune de la guerre)* was caught in a trap, and descended, ghost-like, under the stage: I fancy he called out, Fight, fight! with as much solemnity as Hamlet's ghost cries, Swear! I think this practical wit is a little dangerous. I hope a law will be made that no man shall be witty upon another until he fetches blood, or unfurnishes or fires a house for the jest's sake: for really it becomes necessary to restrain the active genius of our youths; and especially it shall be ordered that no person be witty

if they cannot pay damages, and that unlawful jests, &c. &c. be forborne.—With compliments to my Lord Duke I take my leave.

I am, Madam,

Your Grace's, &c.

E. Robinson.

To the Same.

Bath, Jan. 1740.

Madam,

I cannot help troubling your Grace with a letter to-day, though I have not one word to say that I did not send you in my last; but repetition is the Bath mode of conversation. I think one may live here at as small expense of wit, as in any place I ever was in in my life; and by all rules of economy, the disbursement bearing proportion to the receivings, one ought to lay out very little. I own I think it by no means prudent to begin upon one's stock of wit where, were it once spent,

there is no hope of a recruit; therefore, my dear Lady Dutchess, do not suppose, because you receive none from me, that I have no wit, but avoid that uncharitable, though perhaps, not mistaken opinion, and believe that I could be extremely witty if I dared, and that I only reserve it till times mend. I have observed that one may be extremely humorous, diverting, and witty, without the help of speech! In a place where so many people are so entirely deaf, the only way to general admiration is by the sight, and therefore to be a visible wit is no despicable accomplishment. If this new method of drollery takes in the world, I shall expect to see in the advertisements, Mr. ——, master of the facetious art of grimace, will undertake to teach any person of common features all the archness of countenance necessary to wit. I have been scanning the physiognomy of several people here, and have divided the faces of all my acquaintances into some class of wit; viz. short faces into puns and epigrams, long stern countenances into

satires, ill-natured looks into lampoons, and pert faces into repartee; but in what rank to place Judge F—— I have not determined. He is one of the woeful members of our coffee-house. The Duke of Norfolk is come amongst us; he behaves with great affability; you know his Grace, so I need not characterize him. The Duke of Beaufort is come for a few days to visit Lord Noel. Mr. Morgan Vane has lately admitted himself of the dismal coffee-house. Charles Lyttelton and Mr. Tom Wyndham are our speakers; they talk of every body; what eloquence must we have where such are orators! Mrs. Greville appointed me to be with her the day after Christmas day, and I there found all the beau monde, Lord and Lady Aylesford, Lord Noel Somerset, Lady Hereford, Mr. and Miss Berkeley, Mrs. Howard, Lady Ann Finch, and twenty more. Most of the company sat down to cards, and so I left them pretty early, not delighting in the contemplation of busy faces while I am idle. I was much asked to play at whisk, but thanks to my

stars, which designed me rather to be merry than wise, I have not a capacity for the undertaking. Mrs. Greville has the prettiest house in the prettiest place I ever saw.

I think as my imagination and my fingers are frost bound, I must leave you to better entertainments than reading the Bath miscellany; so putting a period to your trouble and my impertinence, I add no more than truth obliges me to tell you, that

I am ever
your Grace's most obedient,
most obliged,
and most faithful humble servant,
ELIZ. ROBINSON.

To the Same.

Bath, Jan. 1740.

MADAM,

As I am never so sensible of the pleasure one receives from letters, as when I have just had one from your Grace, I am then

much pleased to think mine can return any part of the satisfaction yours give me. I say a part, for I am sure it can be but very small in comparison. Pray what can induce your Grace to accuse me of thinking you troubled with stupidity? Those that have it are never sensible of it; for though half our invalids here are more affected with that than any other disorder, we are more apt to feel it in our neighbour's person than our own. There is a noble Earl here, who complains much of his foot, but wears his head with the most happy insensibility imaginable. I dare say he has not had one uneasy thought, or restless idea in it these ten years. I believe it has a good deal of heraldry and an endless pedigree in it, all the rest is *carte blanche*. I fancy your ball was very agreeable. I wish I could have extended a long leg to Whitehall, to have danced among you. Our balls are over here, and I am not concerned, for instead of the pleasant practice of dancing, I was ordered the painful one of self-denial; but I intend to be so well by spring as to

defy the doctor and all his works, and I will foot it in spite of his wisdom. There is nothing so good for a female constitution, as having one's own way, and they shall not say at Bath that they piped and I danced not. I am better than I have been; the waters have made alterations in my complaints, which, next to a perfect cure, is the best thing I can expect. I am much pleased with the description of the assembly; what judicious persons made the collection? I should have been afraid the lean person would have verified Pharaoh's dream, and devoured the fat one. As for the heir apparent, he did not know what to do with his arms and legs, nor how to behave before dutchesses. I could have sent you some grotesque figures from this place. We have all characters, the impertinent, the stupid, the absurd, the comical; amongst the women we have some laughing hoydens, simpering dames, who are all good sort of women, and ugly ones, who are all good housewives, and not at all coquet. There is one family that affect sense; their stock

indeed is so low, that if they laid out much they would be in danger of becoming bankrupt; but according to their present economy, it will last them their lives. And every body commends them; for who will not praise what they do not envy? To commend what they admire is above the capacity of the generality. For my own part, the praise of the few, whose approbation is the consequence and reward of merit, would better please me than general admiration, if I could attain it. However, I hope I have neither provoked the envy nor the malice of the people here. Mrs. Greville and her daughter have left us. The post is going out, and I must conclude for this time, but not for long shall I take my leave.

I am, Madam,

your Grace's most obedient servant,

ELIZABETH ROBINSON.

I had written the above letter to go by Monday's post, but it was too late, and being much engaged, I cannot fulfil

my intention of sending you another. I fancy the new farce must extremely suit the humours of the age. I do not love pantomime entertainments; however, I am not so great an enemy to silence, as to dislike what is beautiful because it is not witty. I have been at a concert, where the cat's gut has made a worse noise than puss's concert in the gutter. It has diverted me much to hear some pretenders to taste pity those that had no ear; at the same time half the company would have been glad to have lost their hearing. I remember a concert at Tunbridge, where the fiddles squeaked, the bass viol grumbled, the trumpets roared, and the bassoon did what is not fit to be mentioned; and the musicians, after having stunned us in this manner for two hours, took it ill we desired to be entertained with some country dances. However, after much entreaty, we brought them from playing overtures to operas to "buttered pease," and concluded the evening more to our satisfaction than we began

it. We have had morning concerts here lately; most of the performers were gentlemen. I desire my compliments to my Lord Duke, Lady Wallingford, and Mr. Achard.

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*To Mrs. Donnellan.**

January 1, ——

DEAR MRS. DONNELLAN,

THOUGH there is no hour in a day, nor no day in a year, in which one does not wish a friend all happiness, yet it being customary at this particular time to mention it, I will begin with wishing you a happy new year; which to a head and heart as comprehensive as yours, is a wish of great extent. The highest blessing a limited capacity can enjoy is ease and rest, and that may be attained with little means,

* This lady was a correspondent of Dr. Swift. See her letters in the 19th vol. of his works.

and secured with little thinking; but an elegant understanding, and a delicate affection, is pained or delighted with every thing around it, and cannot behold accidents through the medium of indifference. You are touched with every misfortune that happens to your friends; your friendship has appropriated to you the interests of many, therefore to make you happy, your friends must be so too. I wish they may likewise be constant, tender, and deserving, as you could desire. There is nothing so mortifying as the inconstancy of a friend, for every other fault may be excused, but that is aggravated by affection; and the more one loves, the less one can forgive it. I think great tenderness is required to make one happy in a friend, for if they have not as much tenderness as you have sensibility, you are not sure of that gentle treatment, and delicate behaviour, which makes friendship delightful. I believe the reason why matrimony is so seldom agreeable, even amongst people of virtue and

goodness, is a want of attention to each other's pleasure. How easy is it to make any trifle obliging, or otherwise, by the manner in which it is done. A look or tone of voice, will make the same words an insinuation of kindness or rebuke. I think love is as necessary to be the foundation of marriage, as delicacy of friendship; since each gives the desire to please and a fear to offend, with the knowledge too by what small things each may be done, and keeps the mind attentive to oblige. I do not know whether my notion may not appear a little extravagant; I am told I am apt to think romantically. Indeed I am often laying schemes fitter for the virtuous Utopia than the present state of Great Britain. If the world be made for Cæsar let him have it, but I will have my castle in the air, where my imagination shall entertain itself. You have one of the best apartments in it, and I sometimes make bold to snatch the Dutchess of Portland from her great possessions on earth, to refresh herself in

my airy mansion; and I take Penny too from her business of doing good in the world, to her speculative employment of despising its vanities. If you will introduce shepherds into our pastoral, at your peril be it; indeed I think too, without men we should not have the vanity, nor they the ambition, to be as good as we can. You shall have the choosing of the pastor fidos; you have better judgment than I have; and, thanks to my stars or prudence, (for I know not what it is owing to,) I have no partiality to make me desire the nomination; I think too I would have Sir John Stanley, for we see age does not spoil his understanding, and I think Cupid will not, so let him be one. I am to be with the Dutchess till March, and then I vanish to the shades of Kent. Our family will not be in town, which grieves me much, in which I feel my own part of vexation, and my sister's too. Supper bell has rung, so I must finish, but first desire my compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Percival. I hope we shall meet very often. May every year begin with a fresh de-

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monstration of our friendship, and may you enjoy many happy years!

I am yours,
dear friend,
ELIZ. ROBINSON.

☞ The letters seldom bearing any date of the month, and still seldomer of the year, the arrangement is very uncertain; the acquaintance with Mrs. Donnellan began at Bath. Miss Robinson was several times with the Dutchess of Portland in London, at Whitehall, and several times at Bulstrode. The London and Bulstrode letters are put together without any very determinate order.

From Mrs. Donnellan.

London, April, 1740.

MADAM,

You tell me, dear Miss Robinson, you wish to hear often from me, and I assure you, your letter delighted me so, that nothing but laziness, or rather want of spirits can hinder my writing to you, and as that is a malady you are not troubled with, I will

not allow it for an excuse to you, nor indeed any excuse willingly, that would hinder me of such a pleasure as your letters.

Your account of Bath folks diverted me much; there are many things that are not delightful to partake of, which well related give great pleasure, and the delights of Bath are of that kind. As to London amusements, I believe you would rather be a partaker; but since you cannot yet, you will like to hear of them.

Since my last, I passed a most agreeable day with your friend and mine; the Duke and Dutchess of Portland proposed a jaunt into the city to see city-shows, and were so obliging as to ask me, with Mrs. Pendarvis, to be of the party; we were four men, four women; our fourth woman was Lady Wallingford, whom I never saw before; but she seems good-humoured and civil; our four men, the Duke, Lord Duplin, Mr. Achard, and Dr. Shaw,* all new to me. We set out at ten in two hackney coaches, and stopped at every thing that

* The Traveller.

had a name, between us and the Tower, going and coming, and dined at a city tavern. I am not apt to fall in easily with strangers; but there was such an agreeable freedom in the whole company, and especially in the amiable Dutchess, that I never spent a more agreeable day; for our desert, the Dutchess and I had a conversation concerning you, of more flavour than the finest fruit; I wont tell you what we said, but that we agreed in our opinions. The Dutchess has promised to drink tea with me on Monday, so that if you have any witch or fairy in your service, get your flying chariot and make one with us.

I am extremely glad your time is fixed for coming to us, and that we shall have you a month: we will try how much we can make of it. You will find the rage of whist a little abated I hope, if the weather mends and Vauxhall in its lustre. You are in the right to quarrel with the men for letting cards take their places in the ladies' hearts, for I dare say, they would rather hear the gentlemen say fine things than win a slam; and it is want of gal-

lantry in the men, that runs the women into cards; for something we must have to stir our passions, or life seems dull. Lady Helena Percival will continue to take tricks, the men are so dull her eyes do not touch them; indeed no darts strike now, that are not tipped with gold, and I fancy Mr. V—— might have passed unhurt, if Miss F—— had had no attractions but personal.

Your account of the B——'s is delightful; I am almost sorry they have left the Bath, and that I shall hear no more of them, though I hope you have a fresh supply of characters. Things succeed so quick here, one has hardly time to distinguish them, and one ridiculous character jostles out another; my present delight is the fine lady who admires and hates to excess; she doats on the dear little boy that dances, she detests Handel's oratorios; indeed she don't say she admires Mademoiselle Chateauneuf's kicking the tambourine till she shews herself naked to the waist; she owns 'tis indecent, but she goes constantly to see her. I do not

know whether you have heard of this kicking entertainment; I have not seen it, but I have heard it very livelily described; she kicks twice for the king, and once for the audience, to the great edification of the spectators.

I suppose you have heard of the false dice at the last masquerade. I fancy it must have been a pleasant sight; a dozen dominos, at five o'clock in the morning, examining before Justice De Val; I think, they should have been all devils, with horns and hoofs.

I am rambling on to you, but I have a great distress on my mind. Lady Sunderland's daughter, Miss Sutton, a great favourite of mine, is fallen ill of the small pox; Lady Sunderland and Sir Robert have never had it, and have quitted their house. As I have a great friendship and regard for Lady Sunderland, I spend as much time with her as I can, and am just going to her.

I saw the Dutchess of Portland yesterday morning at Zinke's, where she and Mrs. Pendarvis are sitting for their pic-

tures. She desired me to tell you she would write to you next week; she proposes great pleasure in having you this summer with her, but perhaps you may be otherwise disposed of. Adieu; make my compliments to all your family, and believe me, dear Madam,

your affectionate friend,
and humble servant,
ANNE DONNELLAN.

From the Same.

Spa, July 11, 1740.

MADAM,

I LONG so much to hear from you, dear Miss Robinson, and the amiable Dutchess, that I must write to you, though they tell me water-drinkers should not write; but as they say, at the same time, that one should keep the mind easy and cheerful, and I am sure I cannot do that if I do not hear from my friends, I choose

to follow the rule which will give me the most pleasure.

I wrote to Mrs. Pendarvis from Brussels, which I suppose she has told you. I staid there four days, from thence we went to Namur to see a regular fortification, and to have the pleasure of coming down the Maes to Liege, which, though it cost us a day longer in our journey, very well recompensed us for that trouble. I never saw any thing more delightful to my taste, than the prospects on each side the river, which is a very fine one; woods, rocks, villages, convents, every thing that can make a variety. We were two days on the river which brought us to Liege, and half a day from Liege hither. I immediately settled by myself, for I did not find my company would be likely to be agreeable to me, and it was lucky for me I did so; for the poor gentleman, with whom I came, died suddenly of a vomiting of blood the first week. It was a very shocking scene, but the less so, as the poor man was worn out with long sickness, and his wife is a poor simple woman

that cannot be much affected with any thing. I like Spa exceedingly; 'tis a mere country village, with a very romantic country about it. I like the way of living, which is new to me; we are all out by six in the morning in our chaises, and go three miles to the Geronstere waters; we come home at nine, and take a cup of chocolate, dine between twelve and one, go to the assembly at four, where there are all countries, and all languages, half a dozen card tables, and no crowd; from the assembly we take a walk in the Capuchin's garden; all are in before eight to supper, and to bed at ten. As to the company, I do not yet like any of our own folks but Mrs. Price; and here I beg leave to return the Dutchess of Portland a thousand thanks for her letter, which I hear from a lady, that Mrs. Price told it to, was as kind as was possible, and what I can no way return, but by grateful thoughts. Indeed, dear Miss Robinson, such a friend is beyond all the advantages of fortune, for they are not to be bought with treasure; and I do not remember Solomon (in whose

writings I know you are well versed) mentions that most delightful quality in a friend, of doing every thing that is kind, without being solicited, almost unasked. I could enlarge much on this subject, but the place you are in forbids me, so we will turn down the leaf till we have a tête-à-tête. I beg you will tell the Dutchess, that Mrs. Price is better than when she came here; but I can't say in so good a state of health, as one would wish so agreeable a woman. I have dined with her, and should like to be much with her, but there are two fine ladies in her company, Miss Pitt and Miss Greville, who do not seem to desire mine, and when that is the case, I am as backward as they can be, and retire as fast. You can't imagine how much a fine lady improves here, and how much finer she is than in England; we have a prince and princess here, that take up the attention of our English ladies, and all pay their court to them; but Miss Pitt seems to be the happy favourite. For my part, I pay my court to the fountains; I came to visit them; if

they grant my petition, and give me health to enjoy my friends next winter in London, I can resign the favour of the great world. Lady Pembroke did me the honour of a visit yesterday; our first theme was the Dutchess of Portland, the next Doctor Sandys. As she touched a string that pleased me, I liked her, though I think she has a good deal of the fine lady. I assure you, I like Spa so well, that I have often thought, with pleasure, of making a party with you, for I am sure the waters would be proper for you; the journey has no difficulty in it, and much pleasure, and I do not think it dear; my expenses from London, and we were a fortnight, came to about twelve pounds, and we travelled as all do that have not equipages; and the living here is cheaper than either at Tunbridge or Bath; the only want I have is an agreeable companion, for I spend many hours alone, which never was my taste, and is particularly bad with waters, as one cannot read much. This want you see I am providing for against

my next journey, as I am tempting you to set your mind for it.

I heard from Mrs. Pendarvis that your day was fixed for Bulstrode; I long to hear from you from thence, for I am sure you must be in high spirits, as you are in the situation you like. I send this by a gentleman to London; it will be a little more tedious, but it will be surer. I beg you will answer it soon; direct for me, "A Mademoiselle Donnellan, à Spa, par Liege." Tell me a great deal about the amiable Dutchess, the Duke, and the sweet children, &c. &c. Tell me all that your lively imagination furnishes you with; that is desiring as much as I can. You must get your letter put into the post at London, for there is something to be given with it. I can't consent you should shew this wretched letter to the Dutchess; but I beg you will assure her of my best respects, and if she will give me leave, I will add love. My compliments to the Duke and Mr. Achard, and my best wishes to the sweet babes. This is a long letter

from a water-drinker; what must I expect from you? Mrs. Pendarvis tells me you love me: she knows how to give me delight, and has always told me the truth; I will not begin now to disbelieve her, but assure you, dear Miss Robinson, that you meet with a most grateful return, for I am most sincerely and affectionately

Yours, &c.

H. Donnellan.

If I could convey my compliments to sweet Miss Dashwood I would. I hear Lady Wallingford is to be this summer at Bullstrode; this is Spa news.

To Mrs. Donnellan.

Bullstrode, Aug. 21, O. S. 1740.

Dear Mrs. Donnellan,

There wanted no addition to your letter to make me entirely happy, but an account of your own health; if I were to tell

you the part I take in it, you would perhaps think I said a great deal more than the period of our friendship will allow; so to avoid the imputation of flattery, and too prompt professions of esteem, I will suppress a thousand tender things I think about you; but surely where one has found in a few months, in one, as many valuable and agreeable qualities as one might many years have sought for in others, it may be permitted to have soon, for what is amiable and valuable, such a share of love and esteem as may be deservedly accounted friendship. If by the pleasure of travelling to Spa in your letter, I can guess what it would be to go there in your company, nothing I think could make me more happy. I like the manner of living, it is quite new, and the place so romantic! I cannot say I am fond of such early rising, or that I delight in cards, but custom would, in a week's time, make the first easy, and I suppose for the other it is not worse than Bath. I have heard my brother say there are charming cascades and woods; there we might con-

verse with the naiads and dryads free from noise, impertinence, and folly, and leave

> The dull farce, the empty show,
> Of powder, pocket glass, and beau,

for silence and meditation. I wish the waters agreed with my brother, and I could easily prevail upon him to go and gallant us. I must tell you I have the happiness of hearing he is much better in health than he has been of late years. As I have heard you say you know the happiness of having a good brother, I am sure you will easily guess the pleasure this gives me. Your praises of my friend, and friendship, pleased me extremely; I admire my friend above all people, and friendship above all things; it has all the tenderness of love without its weaknesses, and its ecstacies without its jealousies; it is founded in reason and strengthened by time: a friend is the better for wearing, and I think the greatest happiness this world can bestow is to have a friend and be a friend. I believe no one knows better all the charms of friendship than

you, else I should not venture to say so much in praise of it, having often heard it laughed at as a thing rather in name than in nature. I own I have generally shunned the company where I knew the social ties were made a jest of; but many make self-interest the only cement of society. I am sorry to think so meanly of my species; I believe such things are chiefly said by those who have not the tender feelings of humanity, and therefore would as soon take a blind man's word that there is no such thing as the light that he does not see, as the opinion of these savages of society when they say there is no virtue which they do not feel. I hope you received a letter from the Dutchess, with a prodigious long epistle from me, some time ago. Our friend Penny is under great anxiety for the change her sister is going to make; I do not wonder at her fears; I believe both experience and observation have taught her the state she is going into is in general less happy than that

she has left; however Pip has a good prospect, for they say the gentleman has good sense, good nature, and great sobriety; these are very good things; and indeed what a stock of virtues and qualifications ought to be laid in to last out the journey of life! Where so much lies through the rugged ways of adversity, all will hardly serve to lengthen love and patience to the end.

The last sparks of life and vanity are at length extinguished in Lady K——; I believe she has left all her riches to Lady N——, but to whom she has bequeathed her complexion I don't know; she had likewise some pretty features enough to dispose of, as eye-brows, lips, and teeth. I suppose she has desired to be buried in the last wish of an antiquated beauty, cherry colour; the fatal sisters spun the line of her life so equal with the thread of her vanity, that they were shorn in the same instant. Had she confined her vivacity to mere follies, her life had been a very good jest. It is very happy

for her daughter that she will fall under other management.

I am, dear Madam,

&c. &c.

ELIZ. ROBINSON.

To Miss S. Robinson.

Whitehall, 1740.

MY DEAR SISTER,

I HAD your kind and affectionate letter; and I can assure you I have had no pleasure equal to what it gave me since we parted. I believe we should be too much grieved at the swift passing of hours, if we did not look upon the near stages of time, as the road to some happiness. How should we regret every span of life that did not seem to stretch towards the attainment of some desire; as, in a story that delights, we hasten eagerly to the circumstances, without considering that the tale is the nearer told; and very brief

is that of life; yet not to be repeated because that it is good, or that it is short, or that it is pleasant. May your little story be filled with every particular joy, every instance of happiness, every gift of good fortune; and let it be the chief circumstance of mine that I grieved or rejoiced, and loved, and lived, and died, as you did. We had company at dinner on Monday, and in the afternoon I went to Lord Oxford's ball, at Mary-le-bone. It was very agreeable; I will give you the list of company as they danced.—The Dutchess and Lord Foley, the Duke and Mrs. Pendarvis, * Lord Dupplin and Dash,† Lord George and Fidget,‡ Lord Howard and Miss Cæsar, Mr. Granville and Miss Tatton, Mr. Hay and another Miss Cæsar. The partners were chosen by their fans, but with a little supercherie

* The widow of Alex. Pendarvis, Esq. of Roscrow, in Cornwall, afterwards married to Dr. Delany, the friend of Swift. See her letters in Swift's Correspondence.

† Miss Catherine Dashwood, the Delia of Hammond the poet.

‡ Herself.

in the case. I believe one of our dancers failed, so our worthy cousin, Sir T——, was invited and came; but when he had drawn Miss ——s fan, he would not dance with her; but Mr. Hay, who, as the more canonical diversion, had chosen cards, danced with the poor forsaken lady. The knight bore the roast with great fortitude, and to make amends, promises his neglected fair a ball at his house. It did not end till two in the morning. The Earl and Countess behaved very graciously; my Lord desired his compliments to my father. Pray give him my duty, and tell him I propose doing myself the honour of writing to him very soon. I sat for my picture this morning to Zinck; I believe it will be like. I am in Ann Boleyn's dress. I had the pleasure of hearing to-day that our dear Robert had succeeded in obtaining a ship. I am sorry he will go out with the first fleet, for your sake and mine, two respects very dear to me. I tremble too, for fear he should have any engagement with the Spaniards. Mrs. Dewes

desires to recommend herself to you, being of the party of loving sisters.

I hope the ill news of Vernon is not true. My duty to my mamma.

My dearest sister, I am your's most affectionately,

E. Robinson.

To the Same.

Whitehall,——

Dear Sister,

I do not know what to say for my idleness last post, but indeed I was so oppressed by a cold, I could not disengage my mind from its attention to a disordered body, long enough to write a line; but I am now something better, by staying at home and nursing myself, which I am not over apt to do; for I never shew so proper a sense of my own insignificance, as in the small attention I have to myself upon these occasions. I am ordered to the cold bath, and if you could see

me plunge you would think I had not the sense of feeling; but those who can slay mighty men of valour, should be courageous, and so I plunge magnanimously. The Dutchess went with me the first time, and was frightened out of her wits; but I behaved much to my honour. The Duke and Dutchess are very good in lending me the coach every morning to Mary-le-bone, which is two miles from hence, but the Bath was better than any at Charing-cross, or in this part of the world, and they insisted upon my going there Lady North has been so obliging as to invite me, with the Dutchess, on the Prince's birth-day, to see all the company that make their appearance at Norfolk House on that occasion, for they all visit Lady North before they go to the drawing-room. Mrs. Freind is safely delivered of a daughter. My brother Tom says you have surprizingly imitated my neighbour B——* in his style. If his confessions are so proud, what would be his vauntings! I think an ostentatious

* A lover rejected by her.

profession of humility the most ridiculous thing I know. It is an hypocritical appearance of a chimerical virtue, the counterfeiting a falsity; but vanity now sues, and now commands the praise it desires; every way seems easy but the deserving it. I have not seen Mrs. H—— lately, nor can I propose to myself to imitate her. Age wants a better support than a crutch, and youth a pleasanter companion than economy;

Why should we delay, pleasure shorter than the day?
Love has swifter wings than time, and time flies fast away

with youth and beauty. The thoughts of past pleasures and truth, the best of our blessings below, may attach one friend to our age; and present happiness, and future comfort, are better considerations than the solitary state of virginity can promise. I believe I shall do my errand before many people think; but prudence shall be my guide.

I am, my dear sister,
your's affectionately,
E. Robinson.

To the Same.

Whitehall, ——

DEAR SISTER,

I MUST take you from the agreeable company of your grey-bearded heroes long enough to tell you I am much obliged to you for your last letter, and desire another as soon as possible. A living beau is better than a dead hero. I have left one of the prettiest of the species on purpose to write to you; he is a patrician too, and a smugger gentleman than Livy, or any of his heroes. Surely even your heroic spirit will prefer a beau's hand in Brussel's lace, to a stubborn Scævola without an arm. Think of the smell of a musty dictator, taken sweating from the plough, in competition with essence of lavender, for such is the smell of a beau, "Mr. Tattle's wig is sweet, and his handkerchief is sweet, and he is all over sweet."

I dined yesterday at Mr. C——'s. It

was a family party, and it was very entertaining to see how they contradicted each other in every word and action, so that not even the wing of a fowl could be cut off *nemine contradicente.* If one thought he could perform well, the other imagined he could teach better; and contests were ready to arise about the precedency of the liver and gizzard. B—— complained of the vapours, and wished to be in the country to cure his cough, which the old man observed came upon him by keeping late hours. The young one in return scoffed at the laborious sons of day-light. This reminded me of the reading of my youth, when the butterfly in the fable despising the caterpillar, the worm tells him that all his gaudy colours are the produce of the dirt he scorns. B—— seems to hate money, as a young prince hates the prime minister, because it is his father's favourite. I have often wondered why nature made a drone, but I suppose it is in the common course of things, the son of an

alderman bee whose providence has precluded his son's industry.

On Tuesday I was at Lady North's to see all the fine clothes that were made for the birth-day. — Lady Scarborough was richly dressed, the Dutchess of Bedford very fine, Mrs. Spencer had a white velvet, but the Dutchess of Queensbury was such as should be seen at "courts, and feasts, and high solemnities, where most may wonder at the workmanship;" her clothes were embroidered upon white sattin, with vine leaves and convolvolus's, and rose-buds, shaded after nature; but she, in herself, was so far beyound the master-piece of art, that one could hardly look at her clothes: allowing for her age I never saw so beautiful a creature. Miss Pitt had a fine trimming, and looked very pretty. The men were not fine; Mr. Lyttelton, according to Polonius's instruction, "rich, not gaudy; costly, but not exprest in fancy." I do not know what will become of your fine shape, for there is a fashionable make which is very

strange. I believe they look in London as they did in Rome after the rape of the Sabines.

I am, my dearest,

most affectionately your's,

E. Robinson.

To the Same.

Whitehall, ——

My dear Sister,

You will think me the most idly busy of any person in the world; I have got a little interval between vanity and ceremony to write to you, but must soon leave you to dress and visit, the grand occupations of a woman's life. I was at Mrs. ——'s; we were both so courteous, complaisant, and something so like loving, it would have surprised you. What farces, what puppet-shows do we act! some little machine behind the scene moves us and makes the same puppet act Scrub, or

strut Alexander the Great. Madam, contrary to her usual manner, acted the part of the obliging; I, as much against my former sentiments, personated the obliged. Alas! I fear the first mover in the one case was not generosity, nor in the other gratitude. She went over head and ears in promises, and I went as deep in thanks. The evening was concluded, and the farce ended with a scene more sincere and affectionate between Morris, Robert, and myself. I have taken leave of Robert; alas! what a painful word is farewell! Lord Dunsinane came from Cambridge this morning; he says my brother Matt is better in health than he has been a great while. I am reading Doctor Swift's and Mr. Pope's Letters; I like them much, and find great marks of friendship, goodness, and affection, between these people whom the world think too wise to be honest, and too witty to be affectionate. But vice is the child of folly rather than of wisdom; and for insensibility of heart, like that of the head, it belongeth unto fools. Lord Bolingbroke's

letters shine much in the collection. We are reading Dr. Middleton's new edition of his Letter from Rome, with the additions; but have not yet reached the postscript to Warburton. The answer to the Roman Catholic is full, and I doubt not but the Protestant Divine will be as happily silenced. Truth will maintain its ground against all opposition. The dedication to Dr. G—— is modest enough; the Doctor commends his hospitality, and table, but does not tell us his friend was careful not to over-eat himself, which is an omission.

I am, my dear sister,

most affectionately your's,

E. Robinson.

To the Same.

Whitehall, ——

MY DEAREST SISTER,

AFTER a thousand disputes with my own heart, I have never been able to determine whether I would have my absence less disagreeable to you than it is. I am uneasy to think you wanted me, and should be miserable if I imagined you did not. To be forgotten by our friends is a thousand times worse than to be separated from them; and remember, my dear sister, no absence can make you lose any thing of my tenderest love and remembrance. I am happy to find my brother Matt. is likely to recover his accident, and that it will be no bad consequence to him. The Dutchess, upon this, as well as on every other occasion, shewed much goodness to me. I have been much in a hurry lately; on Wednesday I went into the cold bath, which agreed very well with me, and from thence the Duke and

Dutchess, Mr. Achard, Lord George Bentinck, Lady Throckmorton, and Sir Robert, and Mrs. Collingwood, went to Mary-le-bone gardens to breakfast; after that they all went with me to Zinck's to sit for my picture, and we spent the evening at Vauxhall. On Thursday we went in two coaches and six, to Kew, Richmond, and Petersham, Lord Harrington's, where I could turn Pastorella with great pleasure. Such prospects from the most charming place I ever saw! I was ready to cry out, "O care selve beate!" Poor Lord Wallingford is dead; his family is in much affliction, and the Dutchess cannot see Lady Wallingford, which adds much to her concern. He died suddenly of the cramp in his throat. I am much obliged to Mr. D—— for his commendations, and for fear all the civil things that are said of me in Kent should not reach me, I will give you my letter of attorney to receive all you can for me, and send them here. I desire you would spare your speeches of humility, for I think the only thing I exceed you in, is in old age; and the addi-

tion of years is the diminution of charms; a little vanity gives a spirit to the eyes, humility makes one hold down one's head; that is the reason I poke so much. I am now dressing in great haste to dine with Mrs. Perceval. The Duke and Dutchess dine with the Dutchess of Kent, who was so obliging as to ask me, but I was engaged before, and I could not run the hazard of disobliging Mrs. Perceval. My brother Tom arrived yesterday morning safe and well, and I think he is grown fat. I must put an end to my letter.

Adieu, my dear sister.

To the Same.

Whitehall, ——

Dear Sister,

I propose to entertain you with some poetry, therefore you will excuse a lack of pros for this post. I am pretty well in health, but at this present instant not

in high spirits; a key below impertinence and talkativeness. However the Muses, fair ladies, and Mr. Lyttelton, a fine gentleman, will entertain you more agreeably. The verses were written at Lord Westmorland's: I think they are pretty. Either I am very partial to the writer, or Mr. Lyttelton has something of an elegance in all his compositions, let the subject be ever so trifling. I believe what he says in praise of solitude and the country is to please Apollo, who, of all employments, preferred that of a shepherd. To Juno he puts up petitions of more pride and ambition; and from Minerva he has not unsuccessfully asked wisdom and the arts of policy. Happy is the genius that can drink inspiration at every stream, and gather similes with every nosegay!

Does the world want odd people, or do we want strange cousins, that the St—nes must encrease and multiply? No folly ever becomes extinct, fools do so establish posterity. Mr. S—— has a living of £100. a year, with a prospect of better

preferment. He was a great rake, but having been japanned and married, his character is new varnished. I do not comprehend what my cousin means by their little desires; if she had said their little stomachs, it had been some help to their economy. But when people have not sufficient for the necessaries of life, what avails it that they can do without its pomps and superfluities? Mr. B—— came up in the park to me to-day, and asked me if I would give A—— leave to beg my pardon, for that he had ordered him to do it. I desired he would tell him that he was as safe in my contempt as he could be in my forgiveness, and that I had rather not be troubled with him. I thought the valourous captain would put him upon his penitentials, and if A——n's sword was no sharper than his satire, and his courage no greater than his wit, the challenge would not be dangerous. But he is well aware of

"the perils that environ,
"The man that meddles with cold iron."

I really think this fright will give him such a terror of steel, that he will hardly endure the blade of a knife this twelve-month. I hope in his repentance he will not turn his hand to commendation, for though I am not vexed at the spattering of his abuse, I could never endure the daub of his panegyric.

The Dutchess has presented me with a very fine lace head and ruffles. My duty to papa and mamma. In great haste your's

E. R.

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*To the Rev. W. Freind.**

SIR,

I HAD the pleasure of your letter on Saturday, at my return from Ranelagh Gardens; I was glad to see the evening

* Afterwards Dean of Canterbury, son of Dr. Robert Freind, head master of Westminster School, and nephew of Dr. John Freind, M. D. who was committed to the Tower on account of Atterbury's conspiracy. He married Miss Grace Robinson, sister of Sir Thomas Robinson, and of the Primate of Ireland.

of a day spent in diversion improve into friendship. The various pleasures the general world can give us, are nothing in comparison of the collected comforts of friendship. The first play round the head, but come not to the heart; the last are intensely felt; however, both these kinds of pleasures are necessary to our satisfaction. If we would be more merry than wise, we may be imprudent, but to encrease the critical knowledge that encreases sorrow is not the desire or boast, but the misfortune and complaint, of the truly wise. It is really a misfortune to be above the bagatelle; a scorn of trifles may make us despise grey heads, mitred heads, nay, perhaps, crowned heads; it may teach us to take a little man from his great estate, a lord mayor from his great coach, a judge out of his long wig, a chief justice from his chair; it may even penetrate a crowd of courtiers till we reach the very heart of the prime minister. It is best to admire and not to understand the world. Like a riddle, by its mystery rather than by its meaning,

it affords a great deal of amusement till understood, and then but a very poor and scanty satisfaction. To the farmer every ear of wheat is bread; the thresher by dint of labour, finds out it is half chaff; the miller, a man of still nicer enquiry, discovers that not a quarter of it will bear the sifting; the baker knows it is liable to a thousand accidents, before it can be made into bread. Thus it is in the great harvest of life; reckon that lofty stem on which greatness grows, and all that envelope it, as a part of the golden grain, and it makes a good figure; and thus sees the common eye. The nicer enquirer discerns how much of the fair appearance wants intrinsic value, and that when it is sifted there remains but little of real worth, and even that little is with difficulty moulded to good use. Do not let you and I encourage this sharpness of sight; let the vision come to us through the grossest medium, and every little object borrow bulk and colour: let all be magnified, multiplied, varied, and beautified by opinion, and the mistaken eye

of prejudice: thus will the world appear a gay scene; as indulgent spectators we will call every trick a scheme, and every little wish ambition. I am mortified at your not coming to town; I hoped I should have seen you and Mrs. Freind this spring, but as that cannot be, let me hear often from you. I long to hear my little cousin is well. The Dean of Exeter is no more, he died yesterday. Mr. Hay told me, upon hearing me say I should write to you to-day, that he would have me tell you, from him, that Mr. Hume is to be prebend of Westminster; Dr. Holmes to be Dean of Exeter, in the room of Dr. Clark; the Speaker's chaplain is made prebend of Windsor in the room of Dr. Lewis: it is said Dr. Hutton or Dr. Willes is to have Westminster, whoever is made Bishop. Mr. Hay says if you would know any thing more he will write to you; he seems to have a great regard for you. I hear it would be much easier for you to get something new than any thing which your father has had, as it is a precedent that may

open a door to solicitations from persons who have not the reason to expect that consideration which your good, and your father's great and excellent character require; consider this and don't be slack! I know you do not think half enough of your interest. The bell rings, else I could be so impertinent as to advise. Forgive the zeal of a sincere friend and well wisher.

E. Robinson.

My kindest thoughts attend on my cousin.

To the Dutchess of Portland.

Wednesday Night, April 8, 1741.

Madam,

I cannot lose the opportunity which just offers to me to send a letter to the post, though I troubled your Grace but yesterday. My sister continues as well as it is possible to be, and has found out her

disorder, with which she is perfectly content, and sends me very merry messages upon it: they are of the seven day sort, so will turn on Sunday; and on Monday, when it is over, I shall possess my soul in quietness. I am afraid this hurry of spirits, and fatigue, will not prove of service to my mamma; and if the dire hyp does haunt a solitary chimney corner, sure it will visit my papa, now it is sure to find him at home and alone. For my part, I am in the case of poor David, my friends and kinsfolk stand afar off; and when I am to return home I don't know. That the distemper may not continue, my papa has sent away (for the time) half a dozen servants who have not had it, and says he hopes to have me back again very soon; but indeed I hope to prevail upon him to try how the air of Mount Morris agrees with his servants, before I return. I live here very easy, and have as much time to myself as I please; and I have got books, and all the necessaries and comforts, though not the pomps and pleasures, of life. The family are civil and

sensible people. As for the master of the house, he is indeed to a tittle Spenser's meagre personage called Care; his chief accomplishment, as to behaviour, is silence. I never see him but at dinner and supper, and then he eats his pudding and holds his tongue. I believe his learning amounts to knowing that four pennies make a groat, and the sooner that groat becomes sixpence, he thinks, the better. To give your Grace a notion of my way of life, I must inform you of the sort of persons who compose the drama, and their rank of life. They are above farmers considerably, have been possessed in the family, for aught I know, since the Conqueror, of about four hundred pound a year; they have a good old house neatly furnished; but there is nothing of modern structure to be seen in it. I am now sitting in an old crimson velvet elbow chair I should imagine to be elder brother to that which is shewn in Westminster abbey as Edward the Confessor's. There are long tables in the room that have more feet than the caterpillar you immured

at Bullstrode. Why so many legs are needful to stand still, I cannot imagine, when I can fidget upon two. My toilette, I fancy, was worked by one of Queen Maud's maids of honour. There is a goodly chest of drawers in the figure of a cathedral, and a looking glass, which Rosamond or Jane Shore may have dressed their heads in. All things are very neat and clean, though not quite young or handsome. Amongst the old furniture, not to forget the clock, who has indeed been a time-server; it has struck the blessed minutes of the Reformation, Restoration, Abdication, Revolution, and Accession, and by its relation to time seems too to have some to eternity. It is like its old master, only good to point the hour to industry, to wake the slothful soul to labour, to mark the time by voice, though not by action; it is the minister of old care; it calls his servant to yoke the oxen, get ready the plough, wakes the dairy maid to milk and churn: the daughters hear in it the paternal voice chiding the waste of hours, and rise obe-

dient to its early call; even me it governs, sends me to bed at ten, and makes me rise, oh barbarous! at eight. I go to bed, awake, and arise asleep; but I have ever held conformity one of the best arts of life, and though I might choose my own hours, I think it proper to follow theirs. If age be honourable, why should I neglect the fane of antique structure, which shook with the wind that blew the Danes to Britain; turned with the blast that sent our hero Richard to the holy wars, and then stood fair for France with Edward, moved with the glorious gale that brought a conquered King from France with our young victor the Black Prince; it pointed out the hour for gallant Henry to attempt a kingdom greater than his own; it obeyed the wind that brought over the chastiser of wicked Richard; then turned full to the happy wind that scattered the Armada, and moved as readily to the fair gale that wafted over our glorious William: but of late days it has seldom stirred; tired of bringing terror to nothing but a timorous valetudinarian,

or informing the spleen when the wind is in the east; and loath to have the idleness of some admiral imputed to its advice, it moves no more, but seems indeed to be founded upon steady and fixed principles, and I believe will turn no more except it be for Vernon. What will your Grace say to this inventory? I am ashamed, but I observe people are apt to converse like the company they keep; and really I see hardly any thing but this poor fane planted on an aged oak just over against my window, and I hear nothing but the clock telling me how I kill time, while I unhappily reflect the sad revenge it will take upon me; therefore, what can I repeat but what I learn? I am spinning out a happy hour; such I account it when I write to you, and really I have not the art of abbreviation. However, to follow the order of Providence in my story, I will begin with the mother of the family, a venerable matron of grave deportment, who was well educated, and moves in the form of antique ceremonies, but is really a sensible woman: the daugh-

ters are very good housewifes, and I like some other qualities in them, which I understand better than their œconomy. I only wish they could sleep in their beds in the morning, and wake in a chair in the evening: the youngest is very conversable, and the eldest, for mature deliberation, I really believe incomparable; but as I rather want conversation than advice, she is not so agreeable to me as her sister; but considering how well the youngest and I love talking, it is very happy the other does not, or we might want an audience which she gives us at any time. I have brought the gold bag, and basket,* my toothpick case, and the egg, and we converse every day, and indeed they are very good company. Reading over to-day the first letter I had from your Grace, I see you are under apprehensions of being in my debt: I wish I could recollect one circumstance of my life by which you might be so; but really I am sure you are mistaken. My dear Lady Dutchess, for how much

* Presents from the Dutchess.

happiness am I indebted to you! for how many favours! But in answer to them I must say, with the poor but passionate lover, who pays their worth must pay in love, and in that form, my most inestimable friend, I pay the greatest tribute. It is impossible to be more than I am your Grace's faithful, grateful, and affectionate servant,

E. Robinson.

To Mrs. Donnellan.

Wednesday, April 10, 1741.

Dear Donnellan, how can one live if you won't write to one? How dare one die if you won't write of one? Not a letter to bless one's life, nor an epitaph to grace one's death! The case is hard. What did you think was become of me? Nothing worthy your enquiry, that is a plain case. You might have imagined a trifling matter could not have made me

forget or neglect you. Indeed, my dear friend, all my happiness has been in hazard, even the life of my dear sister, who was attacked with the dangerous distemper, and that which of all others my fears have represented most formidable. Before this time you must have been informed by the Dutchess, or Mrs. Pendarvis, of my distress, and also of my flight from the paternal mansion to the house in the neighbourhood. I am at present very happy, as my sister is out of all danger; and I rejoice in thinking she will have one enemy of life and health the less. So much for the state of my mind; the situation of my person is not so gay and cheerful; I am now enjoying the wish of the penseroso,

> By the side of some hoar hill,
> While the winds are echoing still.

I am forced to go back to former ages for my companions; Cicero, and Plutarch's heroes are my only company. Pray how do you and Tully agree? I have taken a great fancy to his friend

Atticus; I love those virtues which, like the peaceful olive, bloom in the shade; I admire the strength of some understandings, but I love the elegance of his. He assisted all parties in distress, followed none in the pursuits of ambition, so that he was neither prompted by interest to what he ought not, nor withheld by fear from what it was right to do. Does not it exalt him in your opinion, that the conqueror of the world, in the pursuit of boundless power and greatness, sent every day to know what Atticus was doing? Would not such a question to any other man in his closet have been the idlest of enquiries, as it would have brought the most frivolous of answers? But perhaps I am partial to all those characters who have amused me in my time of distress. I cannot extract the least grain of entertainment out of the good family I am with; my best friends among the living are a colony of rooks who have settled themselves in a grove by my window. They wake me early in the morning, for which I am obliged to them for some

hours of reading, and some moments of reflection, of which they are the subject! I have not yet discovered the form of their government, but I imagine it is democratical. There seems an equality of power and property, and a wonderful agreement of opinion; I am apt to fancy they are wise for the same reason I have thought some men and some books so, because they are solemn, and because I do not understand them. If I continue here long I shall grow a good naturalist. I have applied myself to nursing chickens, and have been forming the manners of a young calf, but I find it a very dull scholar. I wish it more vivacity for my diversion, for I dare say it has already every thing that is necessary for its own happiness. I intend to gather some cowslips for Mrs. Percival as soon as they appear: pray let me know if they should be prepared in any particular manner. I hear there are many growing in our Arcadia; I might weave garlands of them to bind the brows of some favourite shepherd, but I have not at present one gentle

swain in the neighbourhood. In my hours of leisure I would write my own pastoral, but that I should be ashamed to be the only Phillis in story without a Corydon. There are some squires here who would make admirable Polyphemus's; one of them drank tea here yesterday, and complimented me with all the force of rural gallantry; but for some fault in the flattery or the flatterer, I liked neither him nor myself any better for all the fine things he said. After he was gone, I did but relieve my spleen with some laughter on the subject, when I was told by the matron of the family he would be a good match for a woman with twenty thousand pound. And indeed could one lend out one's liking upon land security, I think one might very well settle it upon him; till that can be done I think him much the more comical subject for being rich. To laugh at a poor man is barbarous. He is a great friend to the family I am with, and I fear will come often; and in spite of his respectable manors, and fee-simple, and ancient mansion, both great and

good, I shall not be able to give a serious attention to his discourse. I wish you could see my habitation; a right reverend and venerable one it is; the staircase that leads to my chamber is hung with the funeral escutcheons of my grandfathers, grandmothers, aunts and uncles, that I seem to be entering the burying vault of the family to sleep with my fathers. It is a comfort, no doubt, to think one's ancestors have had Christian burial, but of what use are these tawdry escutcheons? Sure no passion of the mind, no situation of the human creature is without vanity, if the mourner can adorn with pomp, and the breathless carcase be dressed in it. But, after all, pomp is the extreme unction, consolatory to the sad, and honourable to the departed. Pray write to me, and bring me back to the land of the living; the achievements of the dead, written or blazoned, are not much to my purpose. Send me your journal, and I will quit the annals of all the mighty Cæsars. Let me know what you are doing, and I will forget all that

Pompey the Great ever did: in the mean time, there is no person who has lived since the Roman republic for whom I have greater regard than for Mrs. Donnellan.

Your's, &c.

ELIZ. ROBINSON.

Direct to me at Mr. Smith's, at Hayton, near Hythe.

To the Same.

Hayton, April 20, 1741.

DEAR MADAM,

I HAD the pleasure of your letter yesterday; it made me very happy. If my friends at a distance did not keep my affections awake I should be lulled into a state of insensibility, divided as I am from all I love; not a countenance I delight in to joy me, nor any conversation I like to entertain me, I am left wholly to myself and my books, and both, I own, too little to possess me entirely. What's

Cicero to me, or I to Cicero? as Hamlet would say; and for myself, though this same little insignificant self be very dear unto me, yet I have not used to make it my sole object of love and delight. Indeed I find my understanding so poor, it cannot live without borrowing. I mistrust my opinion, doubt my judgment, but have no one to set me right in them. I want just such a companion as you would be, and how happy would your kind compliance with that wish make me, if the good old folks here could accommodate you; but they are so fearful of strangers I know it impossible to persuade them to it. They are not very fine people; they have a small estate, and help it out with a little farming; are very busy and careful, and the old man's cautiousness has dwindled into penuriousness, so that he eats in fear of waste and riot, sleeps with the dread of thieves, denies himself every thing, for fear of wanting any thing. Riches give him no plenty, increase no joy, prosperity no ease; he has the curse of covetousness to want the property of his

neighbours while he dare not touch his own; the harpy Avarice drives him from his own meat; the sum of his wisdom and his gains will be by living poor to die rich. To want what one has not is a necessity must be submitted to, but to want what one has, is strange policy. I would fain write the history of a miser upon his monument, as, Here lies one, who lived unloved, died unlamented, denied plenty to himself, assistance to his friends, and relief to the poor; starved his family, oppressed his neighbours, plagued himself to gain what he could not enjoy; at last, Death, more merciful to him than he to himself, released him from care, and his family from want; and here he lies with the muckworm he imitated, and the dirt he loved, in fear of a resurrection, lest his heirs should have spent the money he left behind, having laid up no treasure where moth and rust do not corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal.

I thought you would despise my rooks because they cannot sing. I had rather the lark would, at my window, bid good

morrow, and the bird of night, in her sweetest saddest plight sing me to sleep; but I am very fond of my cawing neighbours. I wish I had sent one of them with my letters on Thursday, for I was just now informed that our servant did not carry them soon enough for the post, so they were left at Hythe till Saturday. If I could teach my rooks to fly to Bond-street, I should want to mount their wings and fly to you for a few hours. I find you are in the meridian of Tully's glory; I am afraid you will be less pleased with him in his adversity, when his fears and irresolution make him act timorously, and repent what he has done, accuse his friends, and grieve at every circumstance that crosses him. I own I am much offended at his vanity, and surprised at his timidity; such a desire of glory, and fear of death, seem strangely united as likewise his love of his country and submission to the tyrants of it. I am sure all these things must be accountable to those who are thoroughly acquainted with him; and I have such a desire to know him, that I

shall not rest till I have made an intimate acquaintance with him. I intend to read, with great attention, all his epistles, for I find by those Dr. Middleton has inserted in his work, that he writes very freely to his friends, and indeed most vain persons are communicative of their intentions and thoughts, for they think themselves of importance, and their designs wise. As Atticus is but a new acquaintance of mine, if you make any substantial objections to him I will give him up. I was pleased with him, because he appeared to me just, friendly, charitable, and disinterested. I think a man who distinguished himself in such an age without any one great, heroic, or glaring action, and has, for merely being good, stood fair in the rolls of fame, even to this time, must indeed have built his reputation upon the sure and fast foundation of virtue. I am more apt to trust to the character of a man, whom, being of no party, it was the interest and business of no faction particularly to commend. Atticus's virtue did him so much service as

might sometimes provoke the world to call it self-interest; but yet I cannot find that he ever made court to any one for their prosperity. He always served the great in their distress, and in the turns of their fortune they sometimes remembered the kindness they had received, and requited him for it. He applied himself not at all to the general care of the republic, but only to the relief of particular persons' calamity, so that I think he cannot be reckoned a patriot, but a general friend to his fellow-citizens. I believe him as eminently good as you will find any man who is void of ambition and a desire of glory; for it is to them we owe great and heroic acts. Virtue acts more calmly, it makes a just man, but not a hero. For more of Atticus I refer you to Cornelius Nepos, from whom I got my best information of his character.

The reason for which you wish I would read Horace does me great honour. I am obliged to it for what is the source of much pleasure to me, your partiality for me. Upon your recommendation I had

read it before, but depending upon my brother's having it, I did not bring it with me, and I find he has not got it; what occasioned my mistake, I believe, was Dacier's Homer. I am very impatient to get it into my hands, and will desire my brothers to bring it down with them the next vacation; if Sir Wyndham Knatchbull was in the country I might possibly find it there, for he has many French translations. As for some of our squires, they read nothing but parish law, and books of husbandry, or perhaps, for their particular entertainment, Quarles's Emblems, the Pilgrim's Progress, Æsop's Fables, and, to furnish them with a little ready wit, Joe Miller's Jests. As friendship is founded upon a likeness of disposition, to love calves one should be a calf; and to love country squires one should be what you call a country damsel. Now having assumed something of a higher character than that of a calf or a damsel, I do not find great delight in their company. I think, of the two creatures, I best like the calf, for he stares at me as if he

admired me, but never dresses up that admiration in any awkward phrase; both calf and squire love the dairy-maid better in their hearts, and only look at me as a stranger.

I will save all the cowslips for Mrs. Perceval. Depend upon it those upon whom nature has bestowed no ornaments shall wear no garlands of mine. I am very sorry you are not well; weather goes but a little way towards health and happiness; I think it rather adds to, than creates either. From public spirit getting the better of my particular interest, I wish and pray for rain; the country is much distressed for want of it; there is no grass to be seen; even violets have no fragrance for want of moisture. Like a true Pastorella, I sat me down the other morning upon a bed of violets and primroses worthy a place in Arcadia, but there was not any sweetness in them. The sun scorches one in the middle of the day, and there are no leaves to afford any shade, which makes walking disagreeable. Nature, that generally makes the remedy

grow with the inconvenience, has this year presented us with the sun before we are provided for it. Your friends, the wood nymphs, dare not venture their complexions to the sun till there is some shade for them. I shall frequent their sacred haunts as soon as they come out, and then I will tell you what my oracles deliver from the oak. I am rejoiced the Dutchess is so well; I have not had any orders to write to her yet.* I desire my compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Perceval, as likewise to Mrs. Pendarvis. I am ashamed of the length of my letter; as it comes from the country and a sincere heart, you will accept it. My recommendation of it seems homely; but I can say nothing for the writer, but that she is sincerely your's.

ELIZ. ROBINSON.

* The Dutchess was brought to bed April 9, 1741, of a daughter.

To the Same.

Hayton, Thursday.

DEAR MRS. DONNELLAN,

THOUGH imitation does not deserve the first degree of praise, yet when we follow a good example, some commendation is due to us. I like the folio edition of your letters so well, I am resolved to answer them in the same. I desire that you would never give yourself any trouble upon the subject of postage, for I assure you I never valued a groat, and now that I have such a spectacle of haggard care and wayward avarice before my eyes, I would avoid covetousness as I would famine, pestilence, and all the worst diseases of the mind and body. How disturbed is the soul whose attention waits upon that common drudge 'twixt man and man, a silver six-pence! To this niggardly wretchedness one does not give the ordinary alms of one's pity. The woes of my friend l'Avare divert me prodigiously.

The other day meeting him in a grove, for want of something better to say, I took notice we were under the shade of fine trees; he said, yes, indeed they were brave timber, and would sell well. I said they would afford a comfortable habitation to a colony of rooks. To which, in the same vein, he answered, he loved the creatures well enough, but that they would eat the corn. I then proposed a smaller sort of guests, and said I liked a concert of little birds better: he was of opinion they would be hard put to it to get a living these hard winters. In short, I found he would not give a piece of a cabbage leaf for the support of a caterpillar. I verily believe he would annihilate half God's works to have his granary the fuller. What a disposition of mind is this! more apt to receive pain than pleasure from every thing that is good and valuable; if in their own possession, it is another cause of anxiety, if in another's, of envy. The glorious sun gives him no pleasure, because while it ripens ten acres of corn for him it does as much for

twenty acres of his neighbours. Is there not a strange difference of temper betwixt those who care thus for a penny, and they who are regardless of virtue, reputation, and friends. Poor Miss Y——, to what misery has she devolved the rest of her life to comply with the pride, avarice, and a still worse passion of the man who might have made her his honourable wife! I suppose she intends to hide herself from the world for ever; but without virtue for a companion, retirement must be dismal. Her disregard of reputation is affected, and is seen through, by her mentioning the world's opinion when she pretends to despise it. Conscience is the private watch over our actions; it will blush in the dark, and blame bad actions though hid in silence. The love of reputation is given us as a farther guard, and after even virtue is lost, makes the vicious hide their bad example from society. I believe the desire of being well spoken of can never be overcome, however long people may survive the hour they deserved to be so. This pas-

sion may indeed, as you say, be carried too far for our happiness, because it may be carried too far for our virtue; aspiring after actions of eclat may make us neglect our private duties; to avoid this we must remember

> All praise is foreign but of true desert,
> Plays round the head, but comes not to the heart.

I am very glad to hear of Lord Dupplin's preferment, and the more so, that, as good as it is, we may still say it is less than he deserves. I think one had better have one's fortune below one's merit. We praise that actor in the drama who tops his part, not he that represents the first character; envy or contempt may hiss him off the stage. I hear that Sir Wyndham Knatchbull's youngest girl is ill; my regard for Lady Knatchbull, and the obligations I have to her, will always interest me in the welfare of her children.

I am, my dear Mrs. Donnellan,
your faithful humble servant,
E. Robinson.

To the Dutchess of Portland.

Hayton, May 5——

MADAM,

IN this wicked world your Grace will see honest sincerity go generally worse drest than flattery. In the true affection of my heart, I am going to write a long letter upon paper ungilded and unadorned; but truth, as your friend, may visit you in a dishabille, and by the length of my paper, and its homeliness, I compliment you with the opinion of your having two rare virtues, patience and humility, to endure and accept such an epistle. I had the pleasure of my Lord Duke's letter yesterday; all the contents were agreeable, and especially your commands to write, though I am not just in the situation one would wish a correspondent. I wish you could see the furniture of my desk, which is all eaten by the worms. My pen has served the good old man for his accounts these forty years; I can hardly make it write any

thing but imprimis, item, ditto; if I would thank your Grace for the many obligations I have received, it is ready to write a receipt in full; or would I express that you have my entire affection and esteem, it is going to write for value received; and when I would enumerate your favours, it is in haste to run to the sum total. I believe since the pen was dipped in ink, it never made a compliment, or was employed to express one generous sentiment of friendship. It has been worn out in the service of gain; to note pounds, shillings, and pence, with the balance on the side of profit, has been its business. I hear the burlesque of sweet Pamela and her dear master is very droll; if it has ridiculed them as well as it has Dr. Middleton and his hero, I fancy it must be diverting; but high things are better burlesqued than low; the dedication was really admirable, and I fancy must mortify both the author and the patron. Indeed I believe my friend was the first man that ever complimented gentleman upon not cramming till he was

sick, and not lying in bed longer than he could sleep; but flattery must be at the dinner and the levee of the great. I wish Lord H——y may not get the cholic with his vegetable diet; as it turns to vanity and wind he will be too much puffed up with it. I cannot imagine, after this, how the doctor can ever dedicate a book to the Duke of Newcastle, unless he says, as Pope does, that by various methods they aim at praise, and that

> Lucullus, when frugality could charm,
> Had roasted turnips in the Sabine farm.

I believe many great men have been celebrated for their banquets, but my Lord H——— has the honour of being the first who ever recommended himself to an author by his fasting. I had the pleasure yesterday of a long letter from my sister; her eyes are perfectly well, but she has not made any use of them but in writing to me; and, I must tell you, her care made her steep her letter in vinegar, for fear it should prove as fatal as Pandora's present. The caution diverted me extremely, for I

thought the letter seemed as if it had been sent for a broken forehead. My mamma made me the first visit last Wednesday. If the weather was more mild I might soon hope to meet my sister, but it confines her at home. I had the satisfaction of hearing from my brother Robinson, last post, that he finds great benefit by the Bath waters; but while I was rejoicing at this good news, he informed me Mrs. Freind had just lost her little daughter by an unhappy accident. I know her's and Mr. Freind's tenderness to be such, that they will be extremely grieved at it, and the aggravation of its not being in the common order of nature will add much to the affliction. If your Grace continues to exhort me to write, you must not be surprised if I entertain you with the conversation of the place I am in; you may expect a very good receipt to make cheese and syllabub, or, for your more elegant entertainment, a treatise upon the education of turkeys. I would catch you some butterflies, but I have not seen any pretty ones. I have ordered people upon all our coasts to seek

for shells, but have not yet got any pretty ones; if Neptune knew your Grace wanted some, he would send his maids of honour, the Nereides, to look for them, and Proteus would take the shape of a shell in hopes of having a place in your grotto; I intend to tell the inhabitants of the deep whom they are for, and they will all assist me; even the Leviathan will not be worse than the judge; if he eats the fish he will give us the shell. I am sorry Mrs. Pendarvis has left you for the summer; Dash too talks of departing; when they are gone London will lose much of its charms for you, and the country is not yet delightful; even this sweet month, the fairest of the year, does not disclose its beauties. Pray make my compliments to my Lord Duke, and give a thousand kisses to the dear little ones, and assure them I should be glad to deliver them myself. I hope Mrs. Pendarvis had a long letter from me the beginning of this week. Farewell, my dear Lady Dutchess; farewell is the hardest word

in our language, and to you I generally speak it the last of a thousand.

I am, dear Madam,
your most obliged servant,
E. Robinson.

To the Rev. Mr. Freind.

Hayton, 174[illegible]

Sir,

You are so lazy, that I guess you to be commencing dean and prebend at the least. You have made your friendship a sinecure; as soon as you think fit to do the same by your parish, your friends above will think you fit for a bishoprick. Upon that hope, without being the least of a witch, I will hail you thane of York and thane of Canterbury. So much says Eliza in wrath; but to speak seriously, how has it happened that I have not heard from you? did I not, in my idlest hour of vanity, even in the gay city, answer your

letters? Have you not stolen my hours of leisure from operas, plays, assemblies, and prettier, vainer, lighter beaux? My sister too wrote to you constantly; she indited from the sacred oak, the haunt of venerable dryads; yet, like Solomon's sluggard, for a little more sleep, and a little more slumber, have you neglected all she wrote in sober thought, and I in vanity. I am sure you had time enough at Bath, for it has few amusements for the wise, and such, in my extremest ire, I still allow you; good too, I will add, if you answer my letters; if not, what truth is so evident that anger may not make us deny it? My brother tells me you complain of me; perhaps you are groaning still with the fatigue of the last long letter I wrote you. You will suppose, that when Pea and I met, we forgot at first that there were any other persons in the world. The first we recollected were Mrs. Freind and yourself. I fetched a piece of paper and said we would write jointly to you both, and in love and unity we got down one side, but business, and impertinence, and

a long et cætera of accidents, interrupted us; and this very piece of a letter I burnt the day before I left London. We spent a happy month there together, and what has happened since, my brother, I presume, has informed you. My sister is well again, and once more I possess my soul in tranquillity. I believe you will guess I suffered great and terrible anxiety when I was forced to leave her to a dreadful distemper, whose terrors received great additions from my particular fears of it, and tenderness to her. I had indeed the fairest prospect for her, and could have trusted any thing I had loved a little less to the hazard; but while there is but a possibility of harm to what we dearly love, the mind can know no peace. The want of sleep at first a little damaged my constitution; I had a slight feverish disorder for a week, which I believe was chiefly occasioned by it. I did not mention it to my brother while I was ill, for fear it should make him uneasy, but I am now perfectly well, and, from the reflection of my sister's good fortune, happy

too; though great is the change, you will say, from London and lolling on the velvet sofa of a Dutchess, to humbly sitting on a three-legged cricket in the country. I am in a civil sober family, of middling rank, whose company adds nothing to my pleasure, and takes little from my solitude. I am in general alone in my chamber; a shade of old oaks

> Hides me from day's garish eye,
> While the bee with honied thigh, &c.

A grave society of rooks caw just over my head; ivy round my window tempers the little light that comes through the trees, so that I have not beheld the gaudy sun since I came into it. And here, far from the busy hum of men, and all that the world you live in calls business and pleasure, I am like to remain for some time, and I am not sorry to be without the appurtenances of equipage for a while, that I may know how much of my happiness depends upon myself, and how much comes from the things about me. It will be some time before I shall venture

home, for I think the infection of the small-pox may remain a good while in the house, and to persons who are so unfortunate as to be afraid of it, people reckon it may be more dangerous. Fear, which was given for our preservation, carried too far, may become our destruction. I wish myself inoculated, but shall never have the courage to do it, though I think I ought, were it only to get rid of a fear which is of itself a misfortune; but fear that the ills we know not of may be worse than those we know, is, as Hamlet says, "The respect that makes calamity of so long life." I hear you have wrote to me, pray when and where, and how did you send it? I am much afraid the letter has miscarried; I beg you would repair the loss, and write to me soon. Consider my situation, divided here from all I love. My sister would be very glad to hear from you. I beg my compliments to my cousin, I send my good wishes to the little ones, who I hope are well. I used to talk of you both to Miss Grinfield and Miss Cotes. As for our friend B——, he

increases in chin and misery: he came to breakfast with my papa one morning, and complained of the hyp, for which my good parent advised him to take assafœtida. The prescription was admirable; he might as well have sent him to the tinkers to have mended the hole in his heart. Oh cruel fate, that made no cure for love! thought my friend, and sighed bitterly: really I could not help laughing at the precious balm my papa was for applying to the wound. It would have ruined a happy lover with me. I expect to hear from you in a post or two, for which favour I will wait with faith, hope, and charity; and am, after all my complaints, with very sincere regard, your affectionate cousin,

E. Robinson.

To the Dutchess of Portland.

Hayton, May 7th.

MADAM,

WHAT would your Grace say of me if I could forget one command of yours? That is impossible for me to do while one of the greatest pleasures of my life is the recollection of your conversation. If I have (as you sometimes accuse me) lost by a stupid absence of mind some moments of your company, I have a memory less happily stored for having let slip any word you may have spoken; but what my dear Lady Dutchess has given me as a command, sure I can never neglect. If you remember you desired me to enquire about Mr. P——'s verses; I know the lady celebrated in them does not love to have her perfections so much praised to the world as they deserve, so I asked my brother concerning the publication of them, and told him what before I believe was not an entire secret; he said he had,

after my first mentioning the report of Mr. P——'s printing them, told him that he heard, but did not believe, that he intended to publish his verses; upon which the poet lifted up his hands in amazement, and protested he never had entertained any such design, and my brother says he does not believe he has left any copies of his verses with the family; but that if there should (which he can hardly suppose) arise any such intention, he will certainly hinder the brothers from prefixing any name that might give a dignity to the work. I know there is no answering for parental caprice; else there is nothing in the Muse to blush for;

> Like Phœbus sung this no less amorous boy,
> Like Daphne she as lovely and as coy.

Lovers will follow the fair as children run to catch the sun, without considering it is too high, too distant, and too bright for them; a true lover is encouraged by difficulty, and made eager by despair; probability in the attempt, and prudence in the success, are for the dull mortals

who follow dictates less inspired; these act by a divine enthusiasm. I had this day, this happy day! the joy of meeting my dear sister; we talked to each other at about four foot distance for above an hour in the morning; she would not let me see her face, for I find I have been deceived as to the number, for she tells me she has a hundred and forty spots in her face, but hardly looks red. However, her care would not let me see her countenance; her clothes were put on fresh, for they were sent out of the house when she was taken ill: I could not persuade her to come into the house to me, and had some trouble to prevail upon her caution to admit me to her conversation. Great and mutual was our joy; but I regretted to have her snatched away so soon; thus does it ever seem in life, our pleasures delay their coming and hasten their departure. I know your Grace spends a great deal of time in the country with your books, and you have set apart Cicero for your study there; let me recommend a pamphlet called "Observa-

tions on Cicero" to your reading at the same time; what will justly give it better credit than my recommendation, is the name of the author; it was wrote by Mr. Lyttelton, but his name is not prefixed to it, as I remember; Dr. Middleton compliments it in his preface slightly; it is as much a criticism as the Doctor's is a panegyric of Tully's actions; it is a very little book, but I think wrote with great spirit and elegance; as to the merits of the cause, while the learned dispute I shall never understand, but I think one loves to hear what is said on both sides. I hope you will like this book now I have had the assurance to recommend it; if not, I imagine your Grace will reckon it among my sins of ignorance. The pamphlet will employ you but an hour or two, so that I have not ventured to encroach greatly upon your leisure. Pray let me know too how you approve Dr. Middleton's performance. My papa made me a most gracious visit yesterday. My sister desires I would not omit her compliments; I assure your Grace she retains a grateful

sense of your favours to her, for which, with a thousand nameless obligations,

I am,

My dear Lady Dutchess's

grateful, affectionate, obedient,

and faithful

FIDGET.

To the Same.

May the 7th.

MADAM,

I HAD begun a letter to your Grace last post, but was interrupted by company; then did I regret having left the humble and quiet habitation to which the idle and the noisy did not resort; and where I had leisure to permit me to do what I did like, and no ceremonious duty to oblige me to do that I did not; for what a mortification to leave writing to you to entertain — whom? why, an honest boisterous sea captain, his formal wife, most wondrous civil daughter, and a

very coxcombical son; the good Captain is so honest and so fierce, a bad conscience and a cool courage cannot abide him; he thinks he has a good title to reprove any man that is not as honest, and to beat any man that is not as valiant as himself; he hates every vice of nature but wrath, and every corruption of the times but tyranny; a patriot in his public character, but an absolute and angry monarch in his family; he thinks every man a fool in politics who is not angry, and a knave if he is not perverse; indeed, the Captain is well in his element, and may appear gentle compared to the waves and wind, but on the happy quiet shore he seems a perfect whirlwind; he is much fitter to hold converse with the hoarse Boreas in his wintry cavern, than to join in the whispers of Zephyrus in Flora's honeymoon of May. I was afraid, as he walked in the garden, that he would fright away the larks and nightingales; and expected to see a flight of sea-gulls hovering about him; the amphibious pewet found him too much a water animal

for his acquaintance, and fled with terror. I was angry to find he was envious of Admiral Vernon; but considering his appetite to danger, and thirst of glory, I endeavoured to excuse something of the fault; it is fine when danger becomes sport, and hardships voluptuousness. All this is brought about by the magic sound of fame. Dr. Young will tell us the same principle puts the feather in the hat of the beau, which erects the high plume in the helmet of the hero; but if so, how gentle is the enchantment of the pretty man of praise compared to the high madness of the bold hero of renown! Very safely trips the red-heeled shoe, but most perilous is the tread of honour's boot! But apropos, how do our scarlet beaux like this scheme of going abroad? Do the pretty creatures, who mind no other thing but the ladies and the King, like to leave the drawing room and ridotto for camps and trenches? Should the chance of war bring a slovenly corpse betwixt the wind and their nobility, can they abide it? Dare they behold friends

dead, and enemies living? I think they will die of a panic, and save their enemies powder. Well, they are proper gentlemen, heaven defend the nunneries! as for the garrisons, they will be safe enough. The father confessors will have more consciences to quiet than the surgeons will have wounds to dress; I would venture a wager Flanders encreases in the christenings more than in the burials of the week. I always bear an affectionate concern for the happiness of my brother, but particularly I was interested in wishing him to see your Grace; I wanted to hear how you did, and what you said, and how you looked, with a long et cætera of enquiry after circumstances which, if you did not give a dignity to them by their relation to you, might appear minute. My brother desires I would return his acknowledgments to your Grace and my Lord Duke for the honour you intended him, and he is very sorry he was so unfortunate as to be so far beyond the reach of the message. He arrived here on Sunday morning, much better for the Bath. I am

sorry to find that you are not in good spirits; yet most amiable is the principle of your melancholy; but remember, my dear Lady Dutchess, that the same uncertainty of human affairs which teaches us to fear and doubt even in the most prosperous state of things, should teach us to hope in their worst appearance; all is so uncertain, nothing is entirely sure or entirely desperate. It is but a little while since the physicians thought Mrs. Price dying of a fever, and then in a few days promised her a return of health; they have already failed twice in their opinion, I hope they are deceived now. As for the other person your Grace mentions, their way of life is not favourable to health, but they have great strength of constitution, and a strict regimen will therefore be of much service when they shall be reduced to it. I think it is an age since I wrote to you: are not my eyes ungrateful not to write to you after your Grace had so long blessed them with the sight of you? I find many faults in them; they are weak, ungrateful, and deceitful;

they seem to ail nothing: indeed they have all the qualities of an eye but seeing; however, they are vastly better, and I dare say will soon be well, and I have my infirmity excused by my neighbours, for the complaint is general, and I think a general fault sets more easy upon people than a singular virtue. I am infinitely obliged to you for your care of my eyes, but not total blindness in them, nor my entire affection for my sister, could oblige me to give up your correspondence. I had the pleasure of a letter from Lady Andover last post; I blushed to think how little I deserved it; but, like the rest of the world, I received this good fortune with joy, notwithstanding that reflection. The unfortunate are most sensible of their want of merit, the lucky are pleased with fortune's partiality. Mrs. Donnellan has not answered my letter; I am sorry she has been ill; I think fresh air would do her good. I am much obliged to you for endeavouring to persuade her to make me happy with her company; indeed, when you are gone out of town I

don't know why she should stay in it. As to the glass weight, it was an intolerable burthen to my chin, and as a lover of liberty, I would rather advise it should be broken; it was a plot of Deb's to give weight and steadiness to my head, that she might dress it with more ease. The franks I shall be very glad of, for I think my correspondents will grudge their sixpences for my journals. I will follow your Grace's advice as to the watch; I am glad to see the minutes pass away when some happy hour of the day is to bring me to you; but now I must look into the almanack for the happy period; there are days, and months, and miles between us; when time is so long, it profits little to note hours. Time and my wishes ever fly towards you; but alas! Mount Morris stands extremely still; your Grace may say any thing to me with security; my letters are quite free, and my thoughts too; as to my actions and words they are allowed no unreasonable latitude, but no matter for that, or any thing while I may be and declare myself your Grace's

obliged, grateful, faithful, and very affectionate

ELIZ. ROBINSON.

I desire my compliments to the excellent and noble Duke, and the trusty and much esteemed Mr. Achard. I will write to Lady Andover next post without fail. My love attends Madam Pen, our earthly Pallas, and also Donn and Dash. My mamma, papa, brother Robinson, and my sister, desire their most humble services.

P. S. I propose to go this week down to the sea side to gather shells for your Grace; my papa has a mind I should make a couple of vases like those he saw at Mrs. Pendarvis's; now, considering Pen is inimitable, and I am the most uningenious person in the world, I think my vases will not much resemble hers; it is an unreasonable thing of people to expect me to be handy. I wish, if your Grace finds any shells unworthy of your hands, and only fit to be thrown under foot, you would send them to me.

Adieu, dear Madam.

To the Rev. Mr. Freind.

May 9, 1741.

SIR,

I HEARD to-day from my brother Morris that you were in town; I waited only for information concerning the place of your abode, to write to you. Custom will not allow me to say any thing of what I am sorry to speak of. I assure you no one bears a tenderer part in every thing that relates to you and Mrs. Freind: you cannot have an affliction for which I do not grieve, nor any happiness for which I do not rejoice. I had the joy of seeing my dear Pea yesterday; I cannot express the happiness of such a meeting, but it is saying enough to own it more than recompensed the pangs of parting. It is truly, as well as poetically said,

> The heart can ne'er a transport know,
> That never felt a pain.

My desire to be cheered again by that beloved voice, made me desirous of a meeting much sooner than I should otherwise, in

my shameful fear of the distemper, have desired. We talked about an hour in the open air, at about two yards distance; she kept her hat so close I could not see her face, but as soon as it has nothing left of the distemper but the redness, I am to see her. I am now within sight of our house, at a farm just at the bottom of the gates. I have a very good room, warm and comfortable. It is so low that it flatters my pride by indulging me with an approach to the ceiling. My mamma had sent furniture for the room from Mount Morris, as soon as my sister was growing better, that I might come so near as to be accustomed to the family, and so return to it at leisure without any apprehensions; and it is agreeable to us to be where we can see each other three or four times in a day. I came to this new mansion on Thursday. This wet weather is a mortification to us; but I cannot treat the rain, which is a friend to the public, as my enemy, and am glad to bring a sad reflection on the misery of others to a little sigh of regret for my

private disappointment. The prayers and tears of the poor have access to the heavenly throne, however they may be neglected by an earthly one; and I hope now we shall not be involved in the complicated miseries of war, famine, and sickness; the poor have suffered amongst us extremely; and even health, the blessing of poverty, was destroyed by too great abstinence. I remember we have held many arguments concerning the region of happiness; you was reasonably for placing it in the mean, I was ambitiously seating it in the high extreme; but I find it is every where, from the raftered roof of the duke, to the thatched cottage of the farmer. I find content my companion in this the worst lodging I was ever in; while it is my guest I shall never complain of my habitation. Indeed, I find with satisfacti n that equipage is only attached to our fancy; that we move as well without it, and are in all places the same. It is not consistent with the dignity of our minds, and that spark of divinity we call our soul, to be altered

by every little change of situation. Virtue is guard enough in a croud, and comfort enough in a desert; I mean for a short time. It will sustain us alone, though it bids us seek society and bless it. I am almost a convert to your wherry: I find such content in this small, gentle, current of life, I wish we could meet and talk it over. Alas! why will you and two or three more turn my thoughts to the great city? Envy and anger dwell not in these peaceful regions; but by carrying my thoughts to London, I find they partake of the faults of the place. I am bursting with envy when I think all your friends are enjoying you but me; and I am swelling with wrath when I consider you would not come up till I had left town. Will not the Fates spin us some gentle twine together? Is the thread of our friendship for ever broke? You cannot imagine how much I long to see you; don't let your vanity imagine I mean *you* singular, I mean *ye*, the two in the world the most one. I believe you had a long chiding letter from me before

you left Bath. I was angry, I was lazy, let us both mend. Silence in you is a fault, in me a point of prudence. Why then will you hold your tongue, and make me talk? Alas! it is common to be guilty of a fault to condemn our neighbours, else every transgression would not be published with as much malice as it was committed. You was misinformed as to my Dutchess; thank God she is in good health, and all that friendship and the utmost pride of my desire could wish her, foremost in virtue as in rank. Were she ill, it would indeed spoil the tranquillity of my retirement; but I have the comfort of knowing all my friends are well. I cannot imagine what you can do in London? Here are turtles that agree like you and Mrs. Freind. While you have so much virtue, and so little vanity, come to our groves; all is love and harmony. The little inhabitants sing grateful hymns to Providence, and the voice of nature seems the voice of thanks; joy tunes their voice, joy elevates their wings, and if Providence careth for the

sparrow, shall not much more care for us! While to the smallest creature in the creation a large portion of happiness is allotted, shall the most favoured and dignified of its works be clouded with fear and distrust? We have great reason, as first in happiness, to be first in thanks; but of all creatures we only are repining for our safety. Let us be satisfied that we

> Are in the hand of one disposing power,
> Or in the natal or the mortal hour.

And for our particular circumstances of fortune, that we know this truth, enough for man to know,

> Virtue alone is happiness below.

Much praise should be given to Mr. Pope for making morality speak by the voice divine of poetry. Make my compliments to Mrs. Freind. A leisure moment to yours bestowed upon me would be paid with hours of thanks.

I am, dear cousin, yours,

E. R.

To the Dutchess of Portland.

May 13, ——

MADAM,

I CANNOT express the pleasure your Grace's letter gave me, after not having heard from you five weeks, nor indeed of you for the last fortnight. How can you say it is not in your power to make a return for my letters! mine can only afford you a little amusement, yours, my dear Lady Dutchess, give me real happiness. I hope you did not receive any harm from writing; if your constitution is as naturally disposed as your mind to make a friend happy, I am sure you did not. My sister is just gone from me; our first meeting under the same roof, was this morning; you will imagine we lengthened our happiness as long as the day; this evening she retired a little the sooner, to give me time to write to your Grace. I have not yet been at Mount Morris; though I believe the infection

may be over, I am not willing to venture myself for the sake of the house, while the inhabitants of it can come to me here with much more ease to themselves, and better security to me. My habitation indeed is humble, but it has the best blessings of humility, peace, and content. I think I never spent a happier day than this, though fortune gave no pageantry to the joy. Indeed we wanted none of that pomp that people make use of to signify happiness, but were glad to enjoy it free and alone. We talked of your Grace; I won't tell you what we said, for then you would say I was partial, and my friend complaisant; however my happiest hours are rendered more joyful by the remembrance of you, and my most melancholy less dismal. I can never want inclination to write to you, but that I may not want materials I cannot answer; first you must know those who are impertinent in London are downright dull in the country; here is neither vice nor novelty; and, consider, if news and scandal are out of the question, what a draw-

back it is upon conversation? If I could sit, and rightly spell, of every herb that sips the dew, &c. I might indeed be a very good correspondent, but being neither merry nor wise, what can you make of me? Should I tell you of an intrigue between the moon and Endymion, Aurora and Cephalus, or the people of our sky, you would not thank me for my news; but except the plants of the earth, and the stars of heaven, what do I see here? My eyes, you know, are not fit for either minute speculations or distant prospects; however, I will own I am an admirer of a Narcissus, and now and then ogle the man in the moon through a glass. The first is as sweet as any beau, the second as changeable as any lover; but I know Pen, who despises all beaux and lovers, will afford a regard to these; therefore I imagine them worth my acquaintance. How impertinent is this interruption! Must I leave your Grace for such a trivial consideration as my supper? They have sent me some chicken, but, alas! can one eat one's aquaintance!

these inoffensive companions of my retirement, can I devour them! How often have I lately admired the provident care, and the maternal affection of a hen, and shall I eat her hopeful son or fair daughter! Sure I should then be an unworthy member of the chicken society. I find myself reduced to a vegetable diet, not as a Pythagorean, for fear of removing the soul of a friend, but to avoid destroying the body of an acquaintance. There is not a sheep, a calf, a lamb, a goose, a hen, or a turkey in the neighbourhood, with which I am not intimately acquainted. When I shall leave my ark I don't know; would my dove bring me an olive branch, in promise of peace, I would soon do it; but I am in less haste, because here I have as much of my sister's company, or more than I can quietly enjoy there; and a certain person seems - - - - I can never describe how, nor tell why, but they look a little awful, and pish! and phoo! with a dignity age will never give me; really it is droll, and some things I have seen lately would furnish

out scenes for a play; to me indeed it would be neither comedy nor tragedy; I can neither laugh at what I don't like, nor cry for what I don't deserve; I am very cautious as to my conversation, for I never pretend to think, or to know, or to hear, or to see. I am a sceptic, and doubt of all things; and as a mediator between my opinion and all positive affirmation, make use of an—it seems to me, and—a perhaps, and—it may be; and then I can tack about to the right point of the compass at a short warning. The other day, seeing Dr. Middleton's book upon the table, they discoursed the whole matter over, and set things in so new a light, that I was extremely entertained for two hours, though I had full exercise in following with my assent all that was advanced; we condemned Cicero for folly, Cato for cowardice, Brutus for subjection, Cassius for gaiety; and then we talked it all back again, and left them the very men we found them; for you must know there are persons who, if no one will contradict them, will con-

tradict themselves rather than not debate. I am very glad to hear those I value so much as Pen, Dash, and Don, love me; but I approve their prudence in not telling me so too often, for I am by nature prone to vanity. Indeed, as to Dash, I have been the aggressor, and I have not a good title to complain of Mrs. Pendarvis, but as to Mrs. Donnellan she has not wrote to me this age; I hope they are all well, and desire my compliments, or, in a style which better suits the simplicity and sincerity of my manners, my love. I need not say I am always glad, and I dare not say desirous, to hear from you; let me never interrupt your pleasure, nor hurt your health; but when you have a moment in which it will be agreeable to you to write, remember, my dear Lady Dutchess, that you can bestow it on one whom it will make happy; indeed there are many who may assert that claim, but no one is with more gratitude, esteem, affection, and constancy,

Your's, &c. &c.

E. R.

To the Same.

Hayton, May 13, 1741.

WHAT shall I say to my dear Lady Dutchess for her charming, kind, obliging letter? The pleasures and obligations I receive from you have long been above expression. I thought I saw a kind of constraint in your first letter that betrayed a mind less easy than the words confessed. I know your Grace's tender friendship makes you loath to own a grief, for fear of communicating it; but indeed I must blame that reserve; for while we share the sorrows of a friend, we think we make the burthen lighter. I am much more ready to partake of your concern than to chide at it. As the use of a large fortune does such honour to you, gives so much happiness to your family, and affords such relief to many, I cannot wonder you should be anxious to preserve it. I know that while you look upon it as the means of other people's

good, you can never consider it with indifference. Did the loss only relate to yourself, you would leave the anxiety about it entirely to your friends: but as the concern belongs to many, and depends upon affection, generosity, and charity, I am sure your concern exceeds ours. Our chief desire is your happiness, your's the happiness of others. Fortune gives you the power of doing good, and therefore I imagine few persons can value it more than your Grace; I mean for the use of it. As for that unnatural avarice with which some are possessed, as I do not see its enjoyments, I cannot guess at its pleasures. I hope you will be relieved from this uneasiness; but your quotation is so just I cannot argue against it. I am glad no one ever goes to law with their neighbour for a pen and ink, for then I can never be ruined, for it is all I possess; and fortune gives the common goose to the fat landlord, but it sends me the quills. He surfeits himself with the goose, I my friends with my writing; is not my trouble, a degree farther off? The

wisest and richest man said that multiplying riches was increasing sorrow; how kind is fate to heap no such care upon me! if it spins my thread long and even, I shall be content with it, though it is not covered with gold. To wish to be richer one ought to be sure to be better than one's neighbours, else it is a wish unjust to society. It is easier to be an economist than a benefactor; and if persons who are born to a small fortune cannot be easy in it, how would they suit themselves to a station where the happiness of many must be their care? As for you, my dear Lady Dutchess, your birth promised, and your merit demanded, all the riches and plenty the world could afford, and may you ever enjoy them, as you are sure to do, should the law do its worst; if it is your enemy, I will rail at it as much as Mr. Achard can desire, but I will affirm that the judge, like Justice of old, kept the fillet on his eyes, for had he seen the fair party he could never have determined against her. What you tell me pleases me extremely, and confirms my

good opinion of one of whom I always thought well; the vanity of the other person is most admirable; but to one is given merit, to another vanity, each portion affords a full measure of content. How obliging is it of your Grace to allow me to share your sentiments, and after having said the best things upon the best subject, to say we think alike. I think you left the widow no cause to triumph in her resolution; indeed, it is easier to believe a person's sensibility below humanity, than that their courage is above it. I think it was a very judicious thing of the gentleman to carry his belle an orange, that she might not, according to the saying, vainly shew her teeth when she could not bite. I do not wonder he should like her for loving him, it seems the most artless and delicate kind of flattery, and certainly such a preference comes from the heart; but a man ought to consider that a woman who really loves takes pains to conceal it, and therefore should not trust the forward advances of a coquette; but being loved is an argu-

ment of being lovely, and so a person is willing to trust to it without examining too nearly; and one who is in love with himself, will easily be persuaded another is of his opinion. It is necessary for people to be upon their guard against flattery of every sort; the heart of a lover flatters if his lips do not; we ought not to trust to the eyes that are blinded and dazzled by love. How could a sighing lover, whose piteous plight you paint most ruefully, wander on the banks of Rosamond's pond, and not jump in to quench the flame? or were there not trees enough to hang himself upon? but he likes a dry death better. The lovers of these days are so difficult about the manner of their exit, that they fall at last by the arrows of Death rather than of Cupid. I believe the best preservative against love is friendship. Friendship is more disinterested and constant. Waller, whose sentiments are very delicate, owns that, if the soul had free election to dispose of her affection, it would rather incline to the gentle Amoret (who, I think, stands in the

place of friendship) than for the enchanting Sacharisaa. The pleasures of friendship bring to their sweetness no satiety;

> They bind in ties more easy, yet more strong,
> The willing heart, and only hold it long.

The deification of mortals is a superstition this wise age ought to be ashamed of. I hear Mrs. Dashwood is not well, I am sorry for it, for I know poor Dash will be in great concern and anxiety. Your Grace is very good to make my security your care, it will be the reason I shall make it mine. I have not been in the house yet, nor I will not go for some time. I live here very comfortably; my sister, and my brother Tom, are with me whenever their ceremonious attendance upon my mamma and papa does not require them at Mount Morris. My papa is gone to the election at Canterbury, as are all our neighbours, to endeavour, by their pacific councils, to prevent any rioting, which the ill temper of the people disposes them to, and that will open a way for a petition, and by

that means lose the benefit of their success. I suppose the mayor, and the rest of the guardians of the peace of the corporation will be drunk before the poll is half over; they have weak heads and good swallows. If I was a candidate for Canterbury I would have all the aldermen gaged, and allow them enough liquor to fill them to the right pitch without waste. The little Earl of Rockingham stirs himself notably in the cause: and if the adversary does not send the red cow that swallowed up Tom Thumb against him, a hundred to one but his brother gets the victory. I must beg of your Grace to tell Mrs. Donnellan I will write to her next post, but my eyes have lately been very weak, and I cannot venture to use them again to-day; I do not know what they ail; they seem well but are idly inclined, and will not do any thing at all. It is a great proof I have not the command of them when they refuse their aid to write to her; you know how to value her company, else I should grudge her staying in a dusty town she is not fond

of. I suppose Mrs. Pendarvis is gone into the country, but if she is with you tell her Fidget is her most obedient, as likewise to Miss Dashwood and Miss Cole. Lady Throckmorton was so obliging as to enquire after me of my brother Robinson. I hope Bath will establish her health. How does Mrs. Tatton, now her daughter is absent? My compliments in return to those you sent me from the Duke, Lord Dupplin, and the General. I wish you joy of Vernon's best exploit, if report says true about him.

I am
your Grace's most faithful
and affectionate

FIDGET.

To the Same.

May 30——

I BELIEVE the Admiral's letter did not make his wife happier than it did me, as it came to me accompanied with one

from your Grace. Indeed my regard for him is much increased by this letter. Before I honoured him as great, but now I love him as good; and I must tell you that after all his account of his brave exploits, I was much pleased with his friendly compliment to honest Will Fisher. I was charmed too with his affectionate expression of love to his children. The noise of war, and the trumpet of Fame, is apt to render a man deaf to the voice of nature while he is in the pursuit of glory; but I cannot imagine that a brave man, who is least checked by the timorous council of self-love, should not be of all others, most open to the love of his family and friends. Your Grace will think perhaps that, like Desdemona, I shall be won by some story, passing strange, of hair breadth 'scapes in the imminent and deadly breach; but really I am sensible I should make a weak rib for a hero; and, considering, that while his heart throbbed with courage, mine might pant with fear I shall not aspire to a man who has more courage than suffices to head the

militia, and trained bands whenever it may be necessary for his country that they should march from St. Paul's to Westminster. May he seek peace and ensue it at home and abroad. Let Minerva teach him all her peaceful arts, and Apollo instruct him in any soft accomplishments; but may the fell Bellona, and fierce Mars, never breathe the spirit of war into him! In the realm of fame I could not reign his consort, but must be left his melancholy relict. My love being become, like the nymph Echo, nothing but voice, much he would be praised, but first he must be buried; nor will an envious world utter their commendations, till the ear that merited them is deaf. Then those praises he could not hear for his reward, I should hear to my regret. I remember a story of a disconsolate widow, whose rank did not set her above truth, following her husband's corpse with many lamentations, but the most bitter was, Oh! where shall such another be gotten! Now this irreparable circumstance makes me tremble for Mrs.

Vernon, for there is none such, no not one, should the Admiral be slain. Now for the beaux, the same tailor makes another as good at a reasonable rate, and without loss of time; he makes a buckram man as fast as Falstaff; it is but change of raiment, when the coat is the merit of the man; nor does one expect the beau, who is but a suit of satin, to last like the hero, who is a coat of mail. I am very glad of what your Grace tells me of the law-suit. I hope Mr. Harley has got his book again. I am very sorry for the Dutchess of Leeds' misfortune; if a fright would have made her miscarry, I don't know but her Grace might have suffered by the capers of a certain Miss Hoyden of our acquaintance. As for my eyes, which you obligingly enquire after, I cannot say, in the common phrase, that they are at your service, for really they are not under my command; I follow your Grace's advice, I do not work at all, and I read by my sister's eyes. I thought I had told you a fortnight ago, but I see by the direction of your letter I have not,

that I had left Mr. Smith's, and was come to a room my mamma had furnished for me, in a farm at the bottom of our gates, where she could more conveniently visit me than at a greater distance, and she thought I should grow less afraid of the house, by being near it. I was glad to come here, for I knew I should have every thing I wanted from Mount Morris, and I had a room for a maid, and all was neat and clean, and I could be as much alone as I pleased; and to tell you the truth, I believe that circumstance has helped to make my eyes bad, for before I had seen my sister I was alone all the evenings, and I used to read more than was prudent; now I do nothing at all, and take great care of myself; I should grieve to be forced to see with other people's eyes, but that I reflect it is what the first man in every kingdom does; and what the powerful choose, the weak may well submit to. I have dined at Mount Morris these two days, but they will not let me go up stairs yet; this affords me the comfort of seeing other

people are more fearful for me than I am for myself, though I acquit myself of the duty of caution most rigidly. I believe your Grace never saw so humble a dwelling as mine; it is high enough for Content, which is of middling stature, but high Ambition would break its head in the entrance. If I was poetically inclined I should write a pastoral, but the Muses do not haunt these shades; the poet's laurel, and the lover's willow grow not in our groves; honest oak for timber, and underwood for firing, with conveniences for life, are produced, but no ornaments for story. I would describe my habitation if I had time, but it is late, and my eyes insist upon punctuality. I am greatly diverted with your account of the ancient coquette and antiquated fop. Could not she find out in 60 years, what David wisely said in his haste? May we all better improve our leisure. Oh should I at the fatal hour, when all bloom but that of my top-knot has left me, endeavour to charm, pray, my dear Lady Dutchess, give me a hint that there is an

innocent period in which a woman is not young or old enough to bewitch; those remonstrances wisdom and you will preach alike; but I see the cherry coloured tabby and love hood are by the Destinies laid up in the India cabinet for me. I am very glad the Duke is better in health, and beg your Grace would tell him so. I am Mr. Achard's very humble servant; how humble and how civil does the apprehension of age make one! All this is jest, I am resolved to remain always what I am in the unalterable particular of being your Grace's faithful, grateful, and affectionate

FIDGET.

My best wishes attend the dear dear little ones; you say the Marquis is naughty to mortify me; if he was always in the same humour one should think he had no fancy; allow some whims for his age and sex. It is very good in your Grace and Lady Andover to think of me.

To the Rev. Mr. Freind.

1741.

DEAR SIR,

MANY thanks for your letter; if I should tell you long expectation enhanced its value it would encourage [redacted] in delay. What is always welcome cannot arrive too soon nor come too late; whether it precedes our wish or comes after it, still it must be agreeable. But pray endeavour to give the merit of frequency to your general correspondence, rather than the charm of rarity to a particular letter. I suppose you are now in your bower of bliss at Witney. I imagine Mrs. Freind and you, with Zephyrus and Flora, make the *partie quarrée*. So much for your retirement. As for neighbours, have you any good enough for friends, and agreeable enough for companions? It does but rarely happen that we are thrown by fortune where we should be directed by choice. It is very agreeable to have a

friend in the neighbourhood, but I think it does not often fall out so happily. I do not know whether Mrs. Freind loves riding; walking, I dare say, she does, for it is a friend to contemplation, and her virtue and happiness must reconcile her to thought. Folly, vice, and misery, are its only enemies. I had the first news of our glorious admiral from you; the trump of Fame does not sound in these regions of oblivion; however, you awaked my fears from our dream of peace to rejoice at the success of our fleet, and the virtue of their commander. We were sitting together at the place where I told you I was to remain till our house was clear of all infection, happy in each other, and very easy about other matters; admiring the valour, and praising the virtue of men dead much above a thousand years ago, and enquiring what was become of the daring spirit of ambition and supernatural force of heroism that once animated the world. We were glad you pointed us to our nation to find what was left of it. Dr. Middleton's life of Cicero has led us

among the heroes of antiquity, but I am sick of those votaries of ambition, who sacrifice to the furious grasp of power the peace of nations, the life of millions, the happiness of mankind, the welfare of their country, and the rights of posterity. They are not my true heroes who cry havock, and let loose the dogs of war. The wise disinterested patriot, who guards the safety of his country by his vigilance, is the man made in the image of his Maker, and a far better citizen than the ambitious man, who enlarges its dominion. You will wonder that I should say so much against ambition; if it does not please you, I will say twice as much in its praise as I have in its defamation, for I should be extremely loath not to be thought expert in both. There is nothing more highly sublime, nor meanly ridiculous, than this ambition. What mighty machines raise the vast pyramid of greatness, but how small a puff of malignant breath poisons the gale of fame! If a man is to be blamed through ages for burning a temple in order to be talked of, how

much worse are those who destroy the real images of the living temples of God, only to be spoken of. If ever ambition is to be excused, it is in a little woman, who must stand upon an eminence to become conspicuous; one who finds herself so empty she must have vanity to bear her out. Riches make life easy, greatness makes it honourable, but what can fame do? Does it comfort the ear that cannot hear it? Do laurel wreaths adorn the head long since buried, or statues glad the eye that is shut for ever? Whittington and his cat, and Hercules and his club, are the heirs of fame in a very different way; yet are Whittington, the cat, and Hercules, equally sensible of this fame. Alas! that the ghost of Lucretia, and the Wife of Bath, should dispute *le pas* on the banks of Styx, and have no herald of renown to decide it by our court of honour. Helen and Penelope arrive at the shades, divested alike of good and evil fame, and poor Virginia, the victim of chastity, perhaps leads but an ordinary ape in Pluto's kingdom. Oh, may our Vernon live

long ere he breathes but in the breath of Rumour! May ease reward his labour, honour attend his virtue, and his length of days bless his country! That he has done well, is honourable and happy, and long may he enjoy the best bliss this world affords—the reflection of conscious goodness. I pity the surviving friends of those who were killed at Carthagena; our enemies too we must pity; it is a sad necessity to be obliged to borrow the arrows of death, and the scythe of time, to mow down thousands, and thus to help the cruel enemies of nature. For every shout of public joy how many private sighs are fetched! I hope Captain Robinton* will continue safe and well. I pity Mrs. Freind; it is a sad anxiety to have a brother in such hazard. I wish you had a more intelligent congregation at Witney; I heard that at Bath your audience was delighted, and I hope amended. If the polite cannot be the one, they may be the other by a sermon; if you have not time for a letter, send me a sermon, I

* Killed at Carthagena.

shall be glad of it; but pray do not let your partiality to every thing that belongs to me, generally so much to my advantage, turn to my unhappiness, in representing my letters as too good to be answered by even a line from you. I had wrote to you long ago, but my eyes have been very bad, a general disorder in the country at present, but Pea is *clair voyante* still; she says she is yours; she is mine too, of that I am proud and happy. My brother Robinson is returned from Bath in good health, and desires his compliments; say a thousand kind things for me to Mrs. Freind; sincerely they come from me, and agreeably too they will from you. I am not going to set sail yet; the ocean of fortune is rough, the bark of fortune light, the prosperous gale uncertain, but the pilot must be smooth, steady, and constant; patient in the storms, moderate and careful in the sunshine, and easy in the turns of the wind, and changes of the times. Guess if these things be easily found; and without such a guide, can I avoid the gulph of mis-

fortune, the barking of envy, the deceits of the Syrens, and the hypocrisy of Proteus? So I wait on shore, scarce looking towards this land of promise, so few I find with whom I would risk the voyage. I would have wrote you a longer letter if I had a frank, but careful of your sixpence, though regardless of your leisure, that consideration hinders me. I am at Mount Morris again.

I am, Sir, your's

E. Robinson.

To the Dutchess of Portland.

Mount Morris, June, 1741.

Dear Madam,

My dearest friend, I write to you with an anxious heart, impatient for farther accounts of your health, which Mrs. Pendarvis has promised me. I know your tenderness and filial piety to be as great as any one's, but, at the same time, I trust

your high sense of duty to the great Dispenser of all things, will dispose you to submit to this hard trial;* I know your passions resigned, and your reason commanding; your letter upon this subject gave me great comfort; I see in it you are still yourself, the most tender, amiable, and best of women. It was very good to let me know your state of mind, it best prepared me for the sad sequel, and, believe me, I sympathized with you in every line of your letter. Let me beg of you to endeavour to divert your melancholy as much as it is possible; look forward to the fair prospect of happiness promised to you in the dear little children; do not to the Duke, and to them, such wrong as to impair your health; what an example of patience should you show, to enable your children and friends to bear the sad trial which even you must one day give them! You can never have such a loss as your friends will sustain when they lose you; remember that, be comforted and careful; think when you

* The death of her father, Lord Oxford.

lament you communicate the grief you suffer. I believe your Grace had a letter from me the day I had yours; it came unseasonably to you, and gave me great concern; but, no doubt, you had it some hours before I knew it was improper; I am in no danger of being guilty of mirth when I know you are melancholy. I never wished so much to see you as just now, in hopes that by partaking your grief I might lessen it. True friendship is more covetous to share sorrow than joy; my thoughts are with you hourly, for they are easy of transportation; I wish I could send you more of them upon paper, but indeed I am absolutely forbid to write; but I hope I shall never see the ungrateful hour that my regard to myself shall outweigh my duty to my friend. My eyes are worse for my bleeding; but time, patience, and rest, I am assured, will set all things to rights; the eyes that see hope have prospect enough, and I look for it at the right end of the telescope. It is happy to be able to approach and magnify the objects of our wish; but,

for the dark land of fear, I love to set it at a distance. There is a valley between us and the horizon of hope; such is the general prospect of life. Hope is a fine painter; it makes objects bigger and fairer than the reality; for the easy luxurious imagination, it paints fair scenes of pleasure; to the covetous mind it promises much riches; and that which its nature never can feel, satiety of wealth. To the ambitious it promises power, honour and renown, and happy sway in the great realm of Fame; to a mortal body it promises eternal remembrance; vain thought! But this hope can feed the wandering fancy with all variety of vision; I will leave it your companion and retire; your Grace, whose wishes are taught by reason, duty, and virtue, may trust to it. Providence, who watches over the good, will be its surety for you, though it does not fulfil its flattery to the vain, but scatters the proud in the imagination of their hearts. I will write as often, and as much to you, as my eyes will permit; it relieves my anxiety, I wish it could

yours. My papa, mamma, sister, and brother Robinson, desire their compliments, and beg to assure your Grace of their sincere concern. Adieu, my dear dear Lady Dutchess; may health and comfort wait upon you as constantly as the good wishes of your obliged and affectionate grateful friend,

E. Robinson.

To the Same.

Mount Morris, June 25, 1741.

Madam,

I hope I shall now be able to write to your Grace with more ease than I have done lately; the last time I wrote to you I was ill, and my eyes were very painful; but now I am happy in the recovery of my eyes, and have no pain or uneasiness but in my heart, which aches for my dearest friend. It owes you so many days of joy and satisfaction, it cannot repine at paying you those sympathizing hours

of anguish which any misfortune that touches you can require. It will be great joy to me to hear you keep your health, and in some degree recover your tranquillity of mind; indeed the best sentiments of nature require you should grieve; but, at the same time, all precedents and examples of fortune demand that you should again be comforted. The law of nature is indispensable, the commands of necessity unavoidable. A comparison is the measure by which we judge. Look on the misfortunes of others; the present public calamity will afford many examples of unhappiness. How many mothers have here lost the only support of their age, and comforts of their life; and by the very messenger whom they hoped to have heard their sons were honoured and advanced by victory and triumph, they learned they were conquered and murthered, a sacrifice to their country!—— even thinks their death a fault; and censure speaks so loudly of the action, the gentle voice of pity does not plead for them; this is indeed a death of horrors.

when the aid of reflection, the comfort and assistance of friends, and the interposition of repentance and prayers is far off; when religion and hope do not encourage, but terror and dismay are on every side, with haste and confusion, sad convoy to eternity! Is there (for, my dear Dutchess, you know the tenderest affections of the nearest relation) so sad a case as that of a parent that loses the promise of many years, the flattering hope of a life of care—their only child? Think, too, how many wives this fatal expedition may have robbed of the happiness and the very support of their beings; having now lost their maintenance and friend together, they are left with their children to all the temptations of want, and mean insinuations of poverty. If they can withstand these, how many enemies have they still left to cope with! The outrages of the powerful, the insolence of the rich, scorn of the proud, and malice of the uncharitable, all beating against the broken spirit of the unfortunate. Many unhappy sisters must now be deprived of

the friend and guardian of their youth, orphans and unfriended before, with only this relation to support them in a world dangerous and malicious to youth; here they were promised the sincerest friendship under the tenderest name; and perhaps hopeful and ambitious for this their dearest object have persuaded their brother to this life of hazard, and are now left for ever to repent that which they can never redress. How hard is it to avoid misfortunes for those to whom idleness is improper! Where does ambition, or indeed reasonable industry, call, that conscience, honour or safety, is not sometimes hazarded? This world has much of grief; through life we feel it, and in death we give it, even to those whom to defend from it we would have lived or died as best were for their interest. But let us, as far as we can, shorten our sorrow and lengthen our joys; it is our duty to do so; our journey is but short, it is well to be guided in it by patience and accompanied by hope, and it will seem easier; long it can't appear: "We are

such stuff as dreams are made of, our little life is bounded by a sleep." I must bid your Grace adieu much sooner than I would choose, but Lord Rockingham is just arrived, and dinner will be upon table in a moment. If I can keep my eyes in a seeing condition you shall hear from me constantly. Lady Oxford, I hope, is not entirely cast down.

I am, dear Madam,
your Grace's most obedient,
most obliged, faithful, and affectionate
servant,

E. Robinson.

To Mrs. Donnellan.

Mount Morris, July 5,——

You cannot imagine, my dear friend, the pleasure I had in seeing some lines of your writing. I flattered myself they came to inform me of your recovery, and was sorry immediately to learn your relapse.

I hope Tunbridge will prove of great service to you: I think nothing gives such spirits as those waters, and the air of the place is excellent; I was there two seasons for my health, and I found vast benefit by the waters. I wish I had any excuse but illness, to go this year; I should enjoy your company extremely, for the wildness of the country, and romantic air of every thing, gives great pleasure to those who are fond of the beauties of nature; and I think the variety of such a mixture of retirement and lonely solitude, with the resort of company at other hours, very agreeable. If you recover your health by the help of the waters, I shall still love them better; and I think I have some obligation to them already, for I believe I owe my life to their assistance. Rejoice that the Duke of Portland has so happily got rid of his law-suit; I shall love law the better as long as I live, for having shewn itself his friend; though, for my own part, I have little to do with this part of justice, yet I have always had an opinion in favour

of the proceedings of our courts, and have ever been an advocate for the law; though, as Marius says to the apothecary, "This world affords no law to make me rich." I will not fail to employ some of your leisure, while you are at Tunbridge, in reading long letters. My epistles are of such easy digestion they cannot make the head ache; one might as well complain of an oppression upon the stomach from a whipt syllabub; and indeed the conversation of the place is all in an easy style. No logical arguments, nor mathematical demonstrations, but mighty pretty chit chat, and news and match-making. The men are half of them affecting gallantry, and some of the women coquetry. When the wife smiles too much, the husband frowns; so take the families in the gross and you will find the people of a moderate behaviour. I wish you had a good horse; if I had one fit to be trusted, it should be at your service. At present my exercise is in a one horse chaise, of all things most ridiculous; but I find the happiness of not being sensible of one's own

absurdity; for though I have always laughed at every person I saw in one, I have not thought my gravity at all hurt by it, but sit and reason in it, with such an air of significancy as would divert you. I had like to have paid dear for my diversion one day. My brother drove me along the sea side, upon a bank raised to keep out the sea; our horse took fright, and ran away, and if he had turned to the right or left, we must have been thrown down a precipice; but luckily, while his fancy remained equal, he was stopped by the servant before us, and we prudently got out and walked till we were out of the sight and noise of the sea, which had frighted our horse: but neither my Hippolytus nor I having ever disobliged Neptune, or any of his relations, I cannot imagine why he served us such a trick. Alas, how the dignity of actions are lost! In times of old a young man and his sweet-heart, driving on the shore in a one-horse vehicle, were run away with, and overturned, and from that time he was reported as a hero, and she as

a princess. The poor ocean, which wot not of what it had done, was a mighty deity who raised up a monster to avenge the affronts done to his cousin Phædra. This is a fine story, and almost worth dying for; but if our hapless tale had been told by that mean historian, a news-writer, it had been merely, that a gentleman, and his sister, driving carelessly upon the shore, near Hythe, in a one-horse chaise, the sea threw up a lobster, and the horse ran away, and down they fell, and were killed, and interred together the Sunday following. Ghosts now do not wander on the banks of Lethe, but with their names and memories are thrown at once into the lake of oblivion. Well, you would never forget what a terrible thing it is to be forgotten, if I had time to say more about it; but I must finish my letter immediately.

I am, dear Mrs. Donnellan,
your most faithful, affectionate servant,
E. Robinson.

To the Dutchess of Portland.

July 5, 1741.

MADAM,

FORTY lines could not contain the thanks due for the four I received from your Grace; I am much obliged to you for not delaying a moment to make me happy by your good news; * I w'h you all joy upon it, and to the most noble and excellent Duke also: I was in fine spirits all the rest of the day, and my pace and motion was so quick, that had I been in any room with China or brittle ware, I might have proved very detrimental to it; but as it was, I did only some slight damage to my wearing apparel; for jumping into my brother's study to give him part of my joy, I rent my garment in such a manner, that if I had not carried a joyful countenance, he would have imagined I had done it upon ill news, according to the old custom; indeed, I

* The success of the Duke in his imporrant law-suit.

made a fine confusion in his room; Seneca, Socrates, and Plato, were never in their lives so discomposed with joy; but all degrees of learning, from the mighty folio to the little pocket volume, were put into disorder; the light pamphlets fluttered about, and in short it was long ere peace and silence regained their power in this their empire of wisdom. It is not usual to have such sudden occasions of joy in the country; if we are a little brisker than what is called very dull, it is sufficient; mirth here is reckoned madness, gaiety is idleness, and wit a crying sin. The parson preaches to its annoy, and much in its contempt; the justice magisterially condemns it, the young squire, like a true Briton, hates it as foreign; but indifference is so easy, and dulness so safe, every one recommends the method, they lend their precept and example too to help it forward; who hates the dull, or who envies them? who can or who would disturb them? but for the witty, they carry such a dangerous spleen they are not to be suffered in a civil society.

Among many reasons for being stupid it may be urged it is being like other people, and living like one's neighbours, and indeed without it, it may be difficult to love some neighbours as oneself; now seeing the necessity of being dull, you won't, I hope, take it amiss that you find me so, but consider I am involved in mists from the sea, and that the temperament of the air, and the manners of the place contribute to my heaviness: it provokes me to hear people that live in a fog talk of the smoke of London, and that they cannot breathe there. A proper season for them to stay away who were made for nothing but to breathe. But people in town have other signs of life. But to the good folks that talk in that manner, nothing is an obstruction of life but an asthma; oh, may their lungs never be troubled with a phtisick, since they think wheezing the only misfortune! Poor Alma with them resides in a pair of bellows, and has nothing to do but to puff. We have a gentleman in our neighbourhood, who, not content with his

own natural dulness (though, without partiality, no man has more), has purchased ten thousand volumes at twopence a volume; now except the deep learned and Right Reverend Dr. ———, I do not believe any one ever grew learned from such a study of their fathers; yet I cannot but imagine my neighbour bought this collection for the instruction of his sons; for not being young, he can never hope to read half these books, and they are not sumptuous enough in their appearance to give any suspicion of vanity in him: but see the perverse turn of human things! as the Bishop abovementioned did from the bottom of the mince-pie collect books, I fear these young men will from their books make a mince-pie. It is a great mortification to me that I do not visit this family, for they are certainly the most extraordinary personages in the county; the father was, till this parliament, a senator, a man of few words, but less meaning, when in the House, on common occasions very prating and impertinent; yet he has sold his voice,

empty as it is, at such low gains as he could get. His wife, an awkward woman, he has always kept in the country to nurse seven or eight daughters, after his own manner, and the success has answered the design; he has taught them that all finery lies in a pair of red-heeled shoes; and as for diversion (or, as I suppose they call it, fun), there is nothing like blind-man's buff: thus dressed, and t us accomplished, he brought them to our races, and carried them to the ball, where, poor girls, they expected to be pure merry, and to play at puss in the corner, and hunt the whistle; but seeing there was nothing but footing, which they had never been suffered to do in their shoes, and right hand and left, which their father thought too much for women to know, they fell asleep, as they had often been used to do, without their supper. The sons, for fear they should die, are not to be taught how to live; they are kept at home because one boy of their's died at school; see the advantage we have in living so far from the great city!

You have no such good folks in Buckinghamshire; there your Grace saw a fine importation of S——'s; they had not one article of behaviour so untaught as to appear natural; these have not one manner that seems acquired by art; the two families would make a fine contrast; pray do but figure the Mademoiselles Catherinas advancing in state to meet these jumping Joans; to be sure, seeing Madame courtesy so low, they would think she meant to play at leap-frog, and would jump over her head before she got to the extremest sink of her courtesy; but you will say what are these people to you? because you keep the very medium of politeness, must you be troubled with those that are in the bad extremes of behaviour! Why, really I believe you can have no notion of such awkwardness as this, who have only kept the best company. I must tell you, Madam, you can know but little of the world by keeping company with such people as Pen and Dash; they are quite in a different style from the rest of the world; indeed, when

your humility stoops to one Fidget, you may know what is meant by the word awkwardness: but if she has the honour of living with you, she will be very apt to alter; for I think she is of a nature flexible to example, and if she does but imitate, in any degree, as she admires, she will endeavour to appear, what it is her ambition to be thought, entirely your's,

ELIZ. ROBINSON.

P. S. I beg your Grace to present my compliments to my Lord Duke, and Mr. Achard, and some kisses to the little angels.

To the Same.

6 o'clock in the morning, new style, 1741.

MADAM,

I DO not remember that in all the days of my impertinence I ever troubled your Grace with one idle line before six

o'clock in the morning; having new stamped my importunity, I hope it will pass more current, and that you will better receive this as a fault I never committed before, and very probably may never repeat; but you have always my first thoughts and my last, and you know my thoughts are accompanied with many words, therefore accept them from the abundance of my heart, though they should show some sterility of brain. I wrote a long letter to Lady Andover yesterday; I had reserved a good share of time to write to you, but my papa had a mind I should ride out with him as soon as I came from church; now I can write a gallop, and I never ride faster than a trot; so that I should have made a better progress upon plain paper than I did upon plain ground. But, in short, I was to go upon an high hill to see what did not at all concern me, a great deal of land which was none of it mine, a great deal of sea which is none of any one's, and a little of France which is our enemy's. I gently intimated to my papa

that perhaps if time should make my eyes a little dim, a little land in possession was better than a great deal in prospect; but a quick apprehension in other matters is sometimes slow in taking a hint; and I find, if I sue for lands it must be under covert baron, as the widow Blackacre says. Is it not a sad thing to be brought up in the patriot din of liberty and property, and to be allowed neither? Upon this high mountain we met a gentleman who had a summer house there, into which he received us, and he set forth the beauties of the prospect to us, and distinguished the corn fields near Boulogne, from the pasture. For my part, I scorned to act the part of a spy, so I made no discoveries of their particular economy. When we had, as it were, taken a survey of the world, we returned home; my papa was much pleased with his ride, but I own I do not love to compare my little self, and my small fortunes, to the grand system of the universe; and to consider that upon this earth the greatest emperor bears hardly the figure of a

caterpillar upon a cabbage leaf. I was endeavouring to get rid of this painful comparison; at last I considered the moon but as cream cheese, and I magnified myself with the comparison of a maggot, and went to sleep at night happy and conceited, and demolished a poor gnat that was idly buzzing about me, which three hours before, in the period of my humility, I should have treated as a fellow-creature. While greatness and happiness are but opinion, may we all be well deceived, and favour its cheat which lends us our importance! All the world, but Fidget the forlorn, go this day to Canterbury races; I am not much mortified at staying away, though I am generally pretty ready to make one where there is so great a crowd. Next summer, it seems, I am to go to York races, but that is no joy to me. Obedience has power over our actions; I wished it reigned as despotically over the will. My papa's steward in Yorkshire has been guilty of great misdemeanours, and he must go down to set his affairs in order. I shall

have the satisfaction of seeing my little brothers, which is my only comfort; for when I shall come back I know not, as my papa and mamma are very fond of Yorkshire. They say they will return in the winter, and I hope so good a resolution will not be broken. But my papa has a vast acquaintance there, and they will endeavour to keep him amongst them; he is to choose, and I am by duty to approve; and indeed I intend to persuade myself to like well that which will be whether I like it or not. All this family desire their compliments to your Grace: I beg mine to the Duke and Mr. Achard. My eyes are better; you find they take a view of all nations. My brother, and his chaise, are ready for me. This letter will be sent to the post before I come back, which will not be till nine o'clock, therefore I must not hope t make my letter longer; though I think, after my notable jumble, I might be very witty, according to Sir Richard Blackmore, who says, wit is nothing but a regular fermentation of exalted spirits,

which certainly the warm weather and exercise might occasion in a bottle of small beer; and sure I am not less witty than brewed malt! My brother waits patiently; sure fortune would never give a man such a sister without providing him with a little necessary patience; if the virtue is in him my practice will fetch it out, so shall his goodness be manifested.

I am, Madam,

your &c. &c. obedient,

E. R.

To Mrs. Donnellan.

July 18, 1741.

DEAR MADAM,

IF my eyes were as much at my service as I am at yours, they would assist me much oftener in writing to you; but they enforce idleness upon me, a thing more wearisome than the most difficult business; thus the hours of life run out without pleasure or improvement with those

who spend them idly. Every clock gives hourly reprehension to this folly, yet many learn nothing from this monitor, but when to dine and to sleep: impartial time suffers their neglect of his loan of years, and takes no quicker nor severer vengeance upon them than on those who improve his swiftest moments, and make every instant travel on some important errand; Time, like wisdom, is found of those that seek him, but the foolish shall not know him; he knows that those who neglect their portion of him are therein sufficiently punished: there is no hour well spent that does not lay up happiness for future days. What I would chiefly desire of time to teach me, for the merit and satisfaction of my life, would be to deserve and to esteem better of my friend every day; for in being and having a true friend is the greatest happiness we can enjoy. To the merit of loving much is added that by time of loving long: I have often thought I had got to the utmost limits of friendship, but I begin to think it infinite as time, for it seems to me to

grow with it, and I find I grow continually fonder of particulars, and of friendship in general. I have indeed been very happy in my friends and relations, for accident has done more for me this way than the most prudent choice could have done; but this happens very rarely, for fortunes united are more apt to make division of persons than any thing; in all affairs of life we are apt to sacrifice general peace to little points of interest, and this makes many disagreements in families, and well it may. The generous abhor the self-interested; the covetous fear them; the want of friendliness in a relation must cure one of all tenderness for them; the more we love the more we are disgusted and disappointed to find another insensible to our kindness, and it blunts our affection to find it makes no entrance into their heart. I hope you find much benefit from the waters; I shall be a great deal happier than I am at present, when I hear you recover your health. I believe you know I love you sincerely, but how much, you must guess

by the love you bear to some friend who you think deserves your friendship as well as I know you do mine. I hope Dr. Young will be at Tunbridge this season; he spends some time there. I believe you will find his thoughts little confined to the place; he will entertain you with conversation much above what one generally finds there, where they talk of little but water, bread and butter, and scandal. One sees a good deal of the world at Tunbridge; there is one man drinking waters to cure him of the ill consequence of sloth and avarice, and the melancholy remembrance of having denied himself the benefits of his time, and others the assistance of his money; there the splendid South Sea Director would wash away the recollection of his iniquity, and by magnificence gild his crime till fools admire and envy it. How many adorn their guilt and misery to catch that approbation from others their own heart denies! These waters would indeed be of great use, could they but make Directors void the worm that never dies; but conscience is

a dragon not to be charmed by all the sweetest songs of the Siren pleasure, and in the midst of these diversions, and the gaiety of company, they seem to me not to be able to speak peace to their souls. There are other sorts of people more entertaining, which are those who come to spend money and be genteel in summer, and return in the winter to dirt and pains in their trade; some come to forget a peevish wife, or a surly husband, but all hide their misfortunes under the general name of the hyp. Fancy lends every one a several tormentor fitted to the shape of their fortunes; even madness and misery would hide themselves under the name of vapours. I must tell you I am much better than I have been, and hope soon to recover the disorder of my eyes; I believe, if they had not been thus weak I should venture to be inoculated this autumn with my brother Robinson, to avoid two extreme evils, fear and disease. It is so ordered that our own danger takes us from the observation of another's, therefore I should not have been troubled

with those apprehensions for him which will now find access by my leisure: the occupations of sickness would shut them out. I wrote to you just before you went to Tunbridge; I think my letter could not get to London till the day you left it; I suppose you have had it. My letter will be too late for the post if I don't send it away immediately, therefore, since the word must be said, though disagreeable to utter, farewell.

I am, sincerely and affectionately,

your's,

ELIZ. ROBINSON.

To the Dutchess of Portland.

Sunday, July 14th, 1741.

MADAM,

I WAS in great hopes to have heard from your Grace last post, and indeed (though I am well now) I stood in great want of a cordial. A wise son of Æsculapius gave me a diabolical bolus, that half killed me.

I fainted away about three hours after I had swallowed the notable composition, and was above an hour in such agony that if I had not waited for your letter I had certainly gone to the Elysian fields. You cannot imagine how willingly one lingers in a world where you live! I believe the late Czarina left her kingdom with a gentler warning; indeed, I was very ill, but I could not go without your Grace's letter, and so here I am within the reach of a post-horse; you must know this bolus was to make my eyes well, but it had like to have put out the light; I had taken it twice before without being ill, so it is only a whim in my constitution, and not any fault in the medicine. It is hard I must be either quite sick or half blind; my eyes were not well before, but they are much worse for this potent bolus. I shall dread the latent mischief in wafer paper as long as I live. This medicine seemed to promise a cure for all things, even, my dear Lady Dutchess, for my love for you: but I hope now, in spite of these deadly corporations, the

college of physicians and apothecary's hall, to remain your faithful Fidget. I am sorry Mr. Achard has a sore throat, but I advise him not to hazard more than a pill. Really a bolus is a perilous matter; but flannel is very safe. A woollen draper is a better man than an apothecary; and I am sure Mrs. More could give Mr. Achard a flannel petticoat of great virtue, and it is much the best recipe for a sore throat. I don't know whether this will find your Grace in town or at Bullstrode; but I shall direct it to Whitehall, for there your porter, who is as certainly at your door as the hinge, will take it in, and after due consideration (for I do not take him to be a man of quick parts) he will send it to you. I hope dear Dash is well; I shall write to her to-morrow. If Mr. Spintext had not been somewhat tedious to-day I had wrote to her; but, poor man, he is a good while explaining any thing, and one must wait till he has overtaken his meaning, to which he has not a direct road, nor a swift pace; if he finds it at last, it is well,

if not he calls for it again the next Sunday: some orators are praised for moving the passions, but our good man is excellent for laying them asleep. With him the troubled in spirit sleep, and the wrathful slumber; there is not that turbulent mind that he cannot quiet; he is admirable against perturbation. But I will not preach upon him; not that I can mar the text as he does, but for fear I should imitate his manner while I intend only to describe it. The light and my eyes admonish me to finish; both grow dim. My best wishes attend the young ladies and the Marquis.

I am, Madam,
your Grace's most obliged,
most obedient, and most faithful humble
servant,

E. Robinson.

To the Same.

MADAM,

I AM very sorry your Grace has been ill, but as my dose and fainting had like to have made one less in the world, I hope your bleeding was to make one more; I am suspicious of some such matter. If you could have just such another boy as the Marquis, sure it would be worth the trouble. I am glad to find my disorder was only sympathy, but I own the suspense I was in, till you was better, whether I should live or die, was very painful. I wish another time you would tell me when you design to faint away, that my spirit, so attendant on your's, might leave its tenement in a safe place till it came back again; for really I had like to have spoiled the front of the house by hitting myself against a window, but my mamma caught hold of me and saved my nose entire, which otherwise had been laid low and flat; but now it boasts an eminent

exaltation, and if there was any thing which time could not level, I should hope it might be it; but there is nothing so high that time cannot reach *à la longue main;* nor is there any thing so mighty that he cannot demolish. As the Tower of Babel, and the Pyramids of Egypt have been by him overthrown, so must this pillar of my face one day be brought down, and great will be the fall thereof. I am very much rejoiced Lady Peterborough is with you; I know it will be great comfort to your Grace, and her Ladyship's excellent character makes me content she should enjoy your company, which I grudge prodigiously to those I do not think capable of tasting it. I must beg you not so much as to wish I was with you till the Speaker is gone, for indeed I know she will not choose it, and it would make me most unhappy to think you did any thing disagreeable to them upon my account. I assure you sincerely it is not in my power to come to you before September, so that yet the Speaker is blameless in the matter. I hear the match your

Grace mentions is soon to be concluded; I don't wonder at it at all, for the gentleman is the veriest child of Mammon that ever was; he lives with his sisters without paying for his board, though they have but five thousand pounds a piece, and he has a great estate. My spirits are much raised by the hearing you have got a friend with you, and I hope you will not have any return of your disorder. I have received the letter you mention, as you will see, if the answer gets safe to your hands. A certain person is grievously out of tune, but I have great cares that make me insensible to lesser ills; that you are one of my tender concerns I will not dissemble: I am anxious about you to a degree that I almost blame, when I reflect how vain is our solicitude. There is one who watches continually for your preservation, even he who neither slumbereth nor sleepeth, and my utmost vigilance can only serve me to recommend you to him, which my prayers and wishes do hourly. I think there hardly passes a moment

in which I do not think of you, and always with gratitude and affection, tenderness and concern. This is a tender subject upon which I can say no more; my heart is full of love and you. Adieu, my dear, dear friend; I am afraid you can hardly read my letter, for my eyes are ill again; not so bad as they were a month ago, but worse than lately. We are to have a house full of company this week, but I will steal time to write to you. I shall wish for this long letter you promise me; a thousand thanks to you for writing to me so often. Health and happiness attend you and yours!

I am,
my dear Lady Dutchess,
your most grateful and affectionate
humble servant,
E. Robinson.

To the Same.

Mount Morris, Aug. 2, 1741.

MADAM,

WHY does my dear Lady Dutchess blame herself for opening her heart to me; I am too well acquainted, and too much interested there, not to know and feel what passes in it. Your Grace could not have made me believe it was insensible, or ungrateful, or forgetful; and I should have complained that you unjustly imagined I was only desirous to partake of your joy and pleasures, and not willing to share your grief and misfortunes. I had suffered for your sorrow and from your unkindness too, and that had been too much for me. I am glad you are going to read Cicero; you will find this great man avowing every tender sentiment of the heart, open to friendship, and liable to the softest movements of pity; you will find in him all that is imitable of divinity, all that is amiable in huma-

nity; redressing the evils of his country like a god, pitying the calamities of particulars like a man. The affectors of fortitude, and such as would set themselves above grief and pity, will see here that wisdom and greatness do not teach insensibility and hardness of heart. Dr. Middleton's picture of Tully may be a flattering likeness, but it is a fine model; if he has not given a good example for an historian, I am sure he has for a hero. Ignorance is ever very credulous; and as I know little of Cicero but from the Doctor, my opinion I own, is led by him; faults he has, no doubt; infirmities stick close to humanity; but these very faults are from his virtues: such a fond lover of mankind, one whose heart was so open, and sensible to every passion of his countrymen, in the nature of things, must be anxious about their good opinion. We are never indifferent to the opinions of those we love. This man, then, so universally benevolent, may be excused if he is no less generally desirous of receiving the praise of mankind, than

he was of advancing their happiness. The same spirit of affection to his fellow citizens that made him esteem and endeavour their welfare, made him value and wish for their commendation; let us take the actions of men to proceed as nature has ordered they should, from the same motive, let us not say here the Consul was vigilant, and there he was vain, but let us remember he is still benevolent; acting from that principle when he shows he loves mankind, and when he desires they should love him. Though there may seem a difference in the actions of destroying Catiline, and of desiring to be commended for it; I think they may both be answered from the same cause. But we read to object, rather than to approve, argue rather to divide and doubt, than confirm and determine. Principles are but few, the modes of acting are various; people think it is a fine subtlety to be able to divide them, and then set things far from their causes, and remote from the truth; plain downright mechanical man is represented as intricate, various,

unlike, and artificial; men's characters are much perplexed, perhaps wholly mistaken, and their actions misjudged. Here and there a connoiseur in nature distinguishes the springs of action, and, like a mechanic behind the scenes at a puppet-show, sees upon what different movements Alexander struts and Scapin sneaks. It is in vain to expect absolute perfection in man; our virtues are passions, and passions have still their errors. Another objection to Cicero is his dejection under misfortunes; for this too there may be made many apologies; such a lover of his country must necessarily heavily lament to be banished from it; so fond a parent, and so affectionate a friend, must impatiently suffer the separation from his family and friends; but there appeared in him no excess of any passion but the love of mankind; envy and avarice were far from him, as was the desire of power, except to do good. Tully had not, in his misfortunes, a reliance on any immediate Providence as we have, nor so absolute a belief of a future life. His own prudence,

and happy opportunity to act in, was all he had to trust to; if these failed him his hopes were overthrown, and himself entirely discomposed; a stranger to that heavenly peace which the world cannot give, and doubtful of that life where those that mourn here shall be comforted. History has not done such honour to Tully as he deserves. To mention his virtues in the reign of Augustus, was to reprehend the emperor for his cruelty and ingratitude to this his great benefactor. In the reigns after, the name of a patriot and lover of liberty was obnoxious, and soon there was not eloquence enough left among the Romans to praise his as it deserved; nor was there the virtue remaining that knew to approve what was good. The Lives in Plutarch, which I believe your Grace will find best to read with Cicero, are those of Marius and Sylla, Pompey, Cæsar, Crassus, Brutus, and Cato. At the same time, if you read Cæsar's account of the civil war, in his own Commentaries, and Sallust's account of Catiline's conspiracy, I believe

you will have a better view of the affair; as likewise Cicero's Letters to Atticus, par Mongault; and a little book, entituled De la Grandeur des Romains, et Causes de leur Decadence. There is a life of Atticus, by Cornelius Nepos, which I had in my Italian translation, bound with Plutarch's lives; if your Grace can find it in French or English (if you don't care for the trouble of reading it in Italian) you will be very well entertained with it. You ask me what I have read, and what I am now reading? Alas! I am condemned to external and internal blindness; my eyes have been idle, and will hardly bear the sight of a folio if it be bound in red leather. What little I have read I will give you an account of when I have the happiness of seeing your Grace; however, that you may not imagine I shut my eyes against any thing you ordered me to look over, I must tell you I have read, according to your commands, the account of the life and writings of Homer. I was much delighted with it, and I see nothing in it at all

dangerous or offensive to religion. It is wrote with fine spirit and imagination; gives one a delightful view of the first ages of the world; shows nature in its simplicity, customs and manners in their infancy, before hypocrisy disguised nature, or luxury corrupted it. Your Grace's letters make me very happy; to give a turn of joy to the new day I rather wish them frequent though short, than long and rare. But when you have time to spare I hope for some of it to be laid out upon me, as I know you love to spend it in the manner that will make others most happy, and I am sure no one more esteems your letters than I. My health, which you enquire after, is good. I promise you I will take no more of that horrid physic, though my eyes are but indifferent, and seem to want something to mend them: to alter nature is easier much than to mend it, so I believe I may as well be quiet. I am sorry to tell you certain persons here seem very loth I should leave them this winter. If the desire of my company argued I was very

agreeable (which, I fear, being backed with no other proof, it will not do,) yet I should not be extremely pleased with it. To all the noble and worthy inhabitants of Bullstrode pray bear my humble greetings. My brother and sister are much obliged to your Grace for your remembrance of them; they beg your acceptance of their most humble service.

I am, Madam, your's, &c. &c.

E. R.

To Mrs. Donnellan.

September 13, 1741.

My dear Friend,

I believe you had a letter from me the same post you's came to my hands. I should have acknowledged the favour of your last immediately, but every hour has been taken up with company. I think we have not been a whole day alone this fortnight. Amongst the rest of our neighbours I have seen some of your

acquaintance; Sir Wyndham Knatchbull and his family, Sir Edward Dering, Lady Dering, and Mrs. Scott; I expected Miss Scott, but Lord Thanet and another gentleman came in Sir E. Dering's coach, and by that means prevented her. I proposed to myself great pleasure in talking with her of you; she wrote me word you went from Tunbridge in good health. I wish in your letter you had confirmed this desirable and welcome news. I am afraid this parting with your friends may have given a bad turn to your spirits. Even friendship has circumstances of uneasiness, else, indeed, it would not seem to appertain to humanity. I hope I shall not know the pain of parting with a friend beyond the limits of our island, and must expect the exemption from this uneasiness at your hands; allow me to wish you may never leave us. I find too much space may intervene in our kingdom. You say her Grace of Portland tells you I am not in good spirits; I will whisper to you she is one occasion that I am not so. I am in great pain about her;

I find, by her letters, she is still heavily afflicted about Lord Oxford, and her health much impaired by it; surely I have too good reason for anxiety when I know her ill and unhappy. The time for my brother's inoculation draws very near, and though I have a very good opinion of that method of having the small-pox, yet I cannot enjoy a perfect tranquillity of mind till it is over. I would fain persuade him to have it done while I am in the country, but he will not grant my request; for my papa, I believe, will not let me go to Bullstrode at all if I don't go before that is over; and my brother therefore waits for my departure that I may not be banished for six weeks or two months, which he imagines would be melancholy for me these long evenings, as I should have no friend with me, and am not able to divert myself with books, now my eyes are bad. I have not yet got permission to go to the Dutchess, but I hope it will be granted; however, I must not ask my papa till I am sure what time will be convenient to the Dutchess. I will

endeavour to spend a happy day or two in town that I may enjoy your company. I cannot imagine what Miss Monke could mean by such awkward behaviour, but really I am quite ashamed I spoke a word in her favour. I have begun your friend Horace (in Mr. Dacier's translation); I like him prodigiously; he is a very sensible man I will venture to say; the poetical beauties are lost in the translation; he understood the world, and I fear a near view of it, and much study of its manners will inspire satire. I wish an honest muse would lash the genteel vice you mention, and show the fine gentlemen that a woman should not be made infamous, and a man unhappy, because they are better drest than the man they injure, or happen to be a little younger, or more at leisure to follow, than he is to defend, his wife. I am glad the lady you mention seems disposed to keep her innocence. It is her only charm, and I believe the farthest she can go in virtue or in beauty, is modesty and blushing; I see nothing but a complexion without a pimple,

and a mind without a stain; beauties there are not in either, but what are negative, a bare lack of what is bad. I am glad that Plato * is gone where she will be flattered, and not where she would flatter; Mr. Prior makes his Solomon call flattery the

Parent of wicked, bane of honest deeds.

The saying is worthy of Solomon himself. It is ever a vile means to a bad end. How ungenerous is it to put on the appearance of friendship, and borrow the very language of love, to do an act worse than the force of enemies! They can but compel us to do ill against our will; these borrow your will itself to betray you. They strengthen one's follies by commending them, weaken those virtues, to which the depravity of nature is most averse, by ridiculing them, and, in short, in their whole commerce, these flatterers do nothing but corrupt truth, and throw a false light upon every thing. Alas!

* A name given to a lady on account of her affectation of philosophy.

how many things teach us to deviate from truth. Prejudice, fashion, customs, habit, all lead us wrong, and keep us blind, and shall language, and words, which are to inform us, be perverted to this use too? Is it not enough that we must be upon our guard against the open attacks of the world upon our virtue, but shall our intimate converse come corrupted to our ears? Where then can the mind find honest food, and, what shall nourish right opinions in the world? A man will not speak the truth that makes against his interest, nor an author that which hurts his system, or confutes his argument: but, sure, from friends and intimates one expects the lips to utter the sentiments of the heart.

I am, dear Madam,

&c. &c.

E. Robinson.

To the Dutchess of Portland.

Sunday night.

MADAM,

I FIND, my dear Lady Dutchess, the thorn of care is grafted on the tree of life; it grows on every part of existence; our childhood is fearful, and our maturer age is anxious; nor does fortune present us with a gift of which care has not the charge. Your verse says true and well, but there are evils which our best endeavours cannot prevent or cure, and such is that of foreboding care; we cannot shut out thoughts, like other visitors, because they are troublesome and importune. How shall our mind tell fear it is not at home? or anxiety that it cannot be spoken with? The most we can do is to be indifferent to trifles, and easy with ordinary accidents? but surely there are concerns that will touch every tender and sensible heart, even to a degree of pain and soreness. I am sorry to find there are

disagreeable things happening: indeed I feared it would be so; caprice is a terrible tyrant; he hides his rigour under the names of sport, of fancy, whim, or inclination, uncertainty, irresolution, and a thousand fond excuses. Most people avoid cruelty, and severity, but caprice and their idle will they think may be their guide and governor. To the torment of their invention each dependant must submit; but happier are they who are governed by another's will than such as are tyrannized by their own; a thousand accidents may set our actions and our reason free from another person's dominion, but if once our own passions conquer us, true liberty and the rule of reason is for ever at an end: the soul's calm sunshine and the heart-felt joy is then for ever lost. The storms of fortune are nothing to the storm of passion, and the war of will. So equitable is the order of things, who does an ill receives a punishment. The tyrant of another is the slave of himself; the doer or speaker of an injurious thing is by his passion much abused

and by his conscience sharply reprehended; these things are my comfort in all outrages offered to me. Perhaps this consolation is not taught me by charity, but it inculcates patience. I know my injuries are revenged, so I do less resent, and sooner forgive them. It is most admirably ordered by the Giver of all grace, that good and benefit done to the weakest and meanest, shall to the most great and most powerful derive its adequate reward of peace, of joy, of satisfaction. And on the contrary, the least injury, the smallest oppression offered to the poor and defenceless, shall, even in the bosom of the strong and the mighty, place fear, uneasiness, and unhappiness; the conscience accusing or excusing: conscience is justice's best minister; it threatens, promises, rewards, and punishes, and keeps all under its control; the busy must attend to its remonstrances, the most powerful submit to its reproof, and the angry endure its upbraidings. While conscience is our friend, all is peace; but if once offended, farewell the tranquil mind. I hope, in spite of

vexatious accidents, you will still be happy in the inspection of your own mind, which is so good you must reflect upon it with infinite satisfaction. Misfortunes you have endured patiently, all prosperity you have used worthily, and happiness you have deserved continually; but if, alas! your Grace meets in the measure of fortune some portion of uneasiness, remember still how happy it is that your mortifications do not proceed from those whose unkindness would wound most deeply. Think how sensible affection and tenderness would make you to the least want of goodness in your beloved and incomparable Lord; but (what I think hardly any other Lady but yourself is sure of in her husband) from him you can never fear any thing that can give you a moment's uneasiness; he knows your true value, and esteems and loves you in the highest degree, with a friendship sincere and lasting. I wish you may be happier in your Nottinghamshire journey than I expect to be in my Yorkshire expedition; I shall indeed see my little

brothers, but it will be a meeting to part again immediately; for should I stay in Yorkshire I shall not probably see much of them; my brother Robert I shall miss seeing. May matters turn out better than I expect, and may I return to London in spring! I am, and ever was, of your Grace's opinion about a person's meddling in a certain affair. I guess you may have heard something of it; pray what says a certain gentleman about this marriage of his friend's sister? I take him to have been council for the lady. As for Mr. C——, he will be first of the family of the Dandins. I thought I had sent you word of the match; the old man sent me the particulars of the settlements; I think it was 1500*l.* a year in present; at his death the estate to be augmented to 2000*l.* and four hundred penny-rent for her jointure. Sir R—— W——le made the match; I fancy they will be a loving couple. As for him, he has nothing in his head but what Cupid has traced with his arrow; and I have heard say she has no dash of cool indifferency in her temper.

Miss Meadows is very courageous, I hope she will never grow fat, or, to be sure, he will be divorced from her; his bridal couch must be as bad as the bed of the tyrant Procrustes; if a woman does not happen to fit it she must be tortured. I want to know whether Mr. Legge's daughter is very like himself, that he determines her to be so beautiful; I hope if she should happen to be as brown, she will contrive to be as clever as he is. A little wit is very necessary to qualify the olive shade; with a good complexion it is not absolutely needful. So far of my letter I wrote this morning before breakfast; immediately after, I went to Mrs. S——'s; I found her in excellent spirits, and spent the day with her and Miss C. S—— very agreeably. Time has not wrote one melancholy word, nor experience a serious reflection, in Mrs. S——'s head. It is a happy disposition that cannot receive a disagreeable impression; it is not indifference that shields her from melancholy, but she is armed with mirth against unhappiness; all things please

her, nothing hurts her; fortune and time, that mend or mar us, make no alteration in her; instead of pronouncing that all is vanity and vexation of spirit, she thinks nothing so. Poor Solomon! wise to thy woe, why didst thou forewarn us against pleasures whose deceit our wish of happiness should favour? But I must put an end to my letter; writing by candle light will not agree with my eyes. I fear Dash has been ill, for you say she is well again; this return of health implies it has been absent. I am very glad Lady Andover is well; I beg my compliments to her Ladyship; my letter was not worth any thanks. I grow very stupid or your Grace should hear from me oftener; I have nothing to say but what I think you cannot be ignorant, that

I am, Madam,

with my whole heart, and sincerest, tenderest, and most grateful affection,

your Grace's

most faithful and obliged,

E. Robinson.

All here beg your Grace to accept of their most humble services; mine to my Lord Duke asks acceptance. Let me hear how you do, and what you do; nothing concerns me so much as what relates to you. If your letters are nonsense, my taste is so bad it has no relish for sense, for I am never so delighted as when I am reading them.

To the Same.

Sept. 23, 1741.

I HOPE my dear Lady Dutchess will forgive my having so frequently urged the arguments of comfort and consolation, and does not imagine I speak from a heart insensible, or wishing her to be so. I only ask what you promise to do, that you would endeavour to resist this sorrow, and not fall under it. You must look upon what I say against your grief, as the complainings of a person under a misfortune, for such is your grief to me.

Alas, my friend, you cannot doubt but it has cost me tears and sighs and many hours of melancholy, yet do not say you are sorry I have felt affliction for you; but think what happiness taught me this lesson of love for you, and allow that in the fortune of this world, where pleasure must be paid with pain, I can never suffer too much for your friendship. I am rejoiced at hearing your Grace is well again; your letter found me in bad spirits, indeed I think they are impaired by the shocks I have met with since I left you. After a farewell I took of you, which went very near my heart, my sister fell ill; I suffered inexpressible anxiety upon her account; when that was over I had your afflictions much upon my mind, and my brother's resolution of being inoculated gives me continual fear; I wish it was over, yet dread the hour of execution; I approve his intention, though I tremble at it, and, were I in health, I should wish to keep him company and be inoculated. A clergyman's daughter, about eight miles from us, intended to

follow my brother's example if it succeeded with him, but the distemper has come to her uncalled, and she is in a dangerous way; so I wish she had been inoculated, as it might have saved her life. Your Grace is happy, even in affliction, in having a person so tender of you as the Duke is upon all occasions. To suffer affliction in the case of every one, but to have a true friend in the day of trouble is the good fortune of few. I remember it happened very differently to one whom you have a regard for; when they were heart wounded with misfortune, a person whom nearness of relation ought to have made kind and affectionate, had the hardness of heart to ridicule their tears, and laugh as heartily at their sorrow as ever they did at a comedy. I am very sorry Lady Fanny has been ill, but I hope you have not frightened yourself much about her disorder, as it is common to children of that age. The conduct of the person you mention is monstrous; I thought ingratitude had been the vice of a little low mind. In such it is best excused;

but surely for the wise, the instructed, the taught, nay, for the instructor and the teacher too, to fail in this lesson of society, it is shameful. Gratitude is but a second virtue, generosity is the first; and shall one man let another so far surpass him that he cannot thank, nor remember equal to what another can impart and do! If this person fails in any thing, we may say, Out of thy mouth have we condemned thee, for maxims of honour and virtue they are ever preaching. Oh! when will our words speak our thoughts, and our rules bind our practice! I could preach against this plague of dissimulation with which our land is visited; a sore trouble it is that by such hypocrisy the good may be suspected, the bad may deceive, and the generous and open hearted be easily deluded. Your Grace had ordered me to write a formal letter, and then effaced the command, whether accidentally or on purpose, I cannot tell; but I will write you a short epistle, that you may shew if it is necessary. My papa, mamma, brother, and sister, beg

your acceptance of their compliments. I am, my Lord Duke's, and Mr. Achard's, most obedient, and your Grace's most faithful

E. Robinson.

I am glad Miss Cole is well, and that your Grace has seen her. Dash has forgot me, or remembers me but in displeasure; she has owed a me letter this age. I think Pen and Dash are the only people that are in my debt, for I have left off writing to every one but you.

To the Same.

Friday, Sept. 25, 1741.

Madam,

As your Grace tenders my peace of mind, you will be glad to hear I am not so angry as I was. I own I was much moved in the spirit at hearing you neglect your health, but since Dr. Sandys has been consulted I think there is one

safe step taken, and when his medicines are taken too, I shall think the affair complete; as for me, my dear Lady Dutchess, I have swallowed the weight of an apothecary in medicine; all the tribe of pills, beginning from the mighty bolus, powders of all tastes, electuaries of all consistencies, juleps of all kinds; and what I am the better, except more patient and less credulous, I don't know; I have learnt to bear my infirmities, and not to trust to physicians for the curing them. I endeavour to drink deep of philosophy, and be wise when I can't be merry, easy when I cannot be glad, content with what may not be remedied, and patient where there is no redress; the mighty can do no more, the wise seldom do as much. You see I am, in the main, content with myself, though there is abundant provocation to fall out with a body that wants physic, and a mind that has such need of instruction; however, I am resolved to make the best of all circumstances about me, that this short life may not be half lost in grieving at what I

cannot help, and fearing what I cannot avoid. When I think I must one day die, I remember I may till that day live, and may help the shortness of life by the sweetness of it; well remembering, and applying, to insert between the periods of birth and of death, the necessity of dying; I seek a little happiness, a little pleasure, a little peace. Our happiness should be confined to the hour we enjoy, as our desires to those goods we possess; delay is a cheat, desire an impostor; the time not come, and the possession not gained, are not to be trusted; the first we may never see, the second may not content us: to-day is ours, yesterday is past, to-morrow may never arrive; the present time, of all eternity, the only hour perhaps allotted for our being. I wonder people can so forget death, when all we see before us is but succession; minute succeeds to minute, season to season, summer expires ere winter enters, the time we have lived is gone, the very food that sustains us is reaped by the hand of death; the flower we smell, the

fruits we gather are taken from their little life, the blossom fades, the fruit decays, the leaf withers, the stream we look at passes, the hand of the dial points the fleeting moments, and every night brings death-like sleep; yet while all around us changes and decays, we expect no alteration, unknowing to live, unwilling to die. We lose the present and seek the future, ask much for what we have not, thank Providence little for what we have. In our youth we are coveting for luxury, in our age for avarice. Error guides us when young, repentance employs us when old; what we did yesterday we repent, what we might do to-day we neglect; and, alas! are prevented what we would do to-morrow; ceremony is lord of this day, fashion of the other, business of the next. Few are the hours allowed to freedom, to leisure, to contemplation, to the adoration of our Maker, the examination of ourselves, and the consideration of the things about us. How many turn their eyes from the beautiful objects of nature, and the wonders

of the creation, (nay do scarce regard the sun, the source of light and of life) to dedicate their attention, and all the powers of their mind, to the spots on a card! How shameful is it while the book of nature is so fair, so full of knowledge and beauty, to neglect it for so mean an object, as a piece of spotted parchment! The smallest creature moves by the power of the Almighty, the least leaf was formed by the contrivance of the All-wise; nor does the day alone manifest his glory; in the night season, the firmament sheweth his handy work; the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of him is understanding; this lesson is to be learnt by observing the mightiness of his works, and the wisdom of his ways; but this, like every good thing, is deferred till to-morrow, for few there are that remember their Creator in the days of their youth, and trust in him in their decline; we put off all things but death, which will not be delayed; he overtakes the projector in his scheme, and the slothful in his idleness

he bids make ready. But why should I trouble your Grace with these reflections? What my little knowledge can suggest, you must know better; what my short experience has shown, you must have more observed. However, I am sure any thing is more acceptable to you than news, compliments, or idle tittle-tattle, so I always give your Grace the present thoughts of my heart, and wishing you happy enjoyment of the present time, and many future blissful days, I take my leave.*

Your Grace's

most obedient, most obliged,

and most grateful humble servant,

E. Robinson.

* The reflections in this letter, and in many others of this period, are too much drawn out. It is hoped they will be considered, and judged, as the essays of a youthful understanding, and not as specimens of perfection in the style of epistolary writing. At a future period we shall not have the same occasion to deprecate the severity of criticism.

To the Same.

Oct. 5, ——

MADAM,

YOUR Grace so often desires me to write to you frequently, that, I think, I must ask pardon for my silence, though it would seem an arrogance in me to imagine it a fault for any reason but being contrary to your commands. The true cause of my not having wrote to you so long is that I have been ill, and I was ashamed to trouble you with the produce of an aching head. Besides, water-gruel, as it feeds no humours, starves impertinence. While it was my diet, I did not find any superabundance of talk, nor hardly a power of being troublesome to any one but myself. I am now pretty well again, and have recovered my strength entirely; as for my spirits they were good all the time, for I am not much concerned, nor very angry at my constitution, which, though it troubles me now sometimes, may perhaps save

me from the infirmities of age, and the manifold sorrows of threescore, and all the outrages of Time, the grand destroyer. I was in hopes of a letter from your Grace last post, but that hope was founded on vanity, so it ended in disappointment, as such light-grounded hope generally does. I can easily imagine your time is much employed, and own, with gratitude and pleasure, you have given me a much greater share of it than I deserve. I had a letter from Donnellan the other day; she tells me she is not perfectly well, but yet in good spirits. Her mind seems just in the medium one would wish, in the very region of reason, below mirth and above melancholy. I think her letters extremely good, and, like herself, unaccompanied with conceit and self-opinion. My papa is just returned from Lord T——'s; the Countess is in high humour, rails at the absent, frets at the present, and, in short, is quite unhappy through the abundance of her wit; people who in good fortune contrive to be miserable, are as much too exquisite in their senses

as those to whom a rose is too sweet, or fine music too shrill; from this elegant sense of things, oh reason, preserve us! The merry see their neighbours' faults, but the delicate feel them; and very different it is to behold and to suffer; the first is liable to mirth, the second hardly compatible with patience. I wonder how those can endure the world who find nothing in it to love or commend. I hear my Lady makes very free with characters above her own (I don't mean reputations of virtue); I should be angry at this liberty in her, if I did not think she said it from the love of singularity, and the vanity of an opinion different from the world; and if there is more honour in being alone in the wrong, than in the right with the rest of mankind, she talks to some purpose, though without truth, which to a plain understanding seems the end of conversation. But words are so variously applied, I scarce know how to determine what the gift of speech was given us for. We speak with more than twelve tongues, but none of them are of

the holy spirit. We must cure people of errors and lying as they do of stuttering, by a long course of silence; and so beginning again without the misleading of bad habit there may be no impediment to thoughts and meaning.

Miss Scott is at length going to be married to Mr. Saumaise: they both continue in the service of the Princess of Orange. The match has been talked of ever since the Princess went over, but it is now concluded, after long deliberation. Your Grace always enquires how my eyes do; I can now give a good account of them, and of my nose also, which, by the thinness of my cheeks, for I am not so fat as I was when I left you, is really in high glory. I beg my compliments to the Duke and Mr. Dupoivre.* I am very well now, I do assure you, and therefore do not be in any care about me; only, my dear Lady Dutchess, love me, and believe me your's, with all gratitude, and tender affection,

ELIZ. ROBINSON.

* A name given to Mr. Achard, formerly tutor to the Duke.

To the Same.

Mount Morris, October 7, 1741.

MADAM,

I HAD the favour of your Grace's letter last post, and am now set down to answer it with the satisfaction of having my wishes granted, my papa and mamma having given me leave to make myself happy in once more enjoying the company of my dearest friend. My mamma has told your Grace that I am obliged to stay two nights in town upon the account of coming up with my brother Tom, which will be more agreeable to me, and convenient than a journey alone at this gloomy time of the year. I long to see my dear Lady Dutchess, but fear I shall not find you in such health and spirits as I could wish; for my part I don't fear but cheerfulness will come to me when I am with you, but I will own that not even the delightful prospect of our meeting can bear up my spirits to-day; a certain

person has been irresolute concerning my journey; but patience is our duty. I wish insensibility had been my lot since affection is so great a pain. I shall spend my time in town with Donnellan, and will be ready to come when Mr. John, your coachman, shall give me leave. Pray talk a great deal, before I come, to Pen and Pip, that your Grace may have an hour tete-à-tete with me. I have so many things to say that if I was not quicker in speech than Dr. Burton, I should never get to the end of my story; I am sure I shall utter more words in half an hour after I get to you than ever he spoke in his life; if he would infuse a little meaning into me, and I could lend him some syllables, we should both speak the better for it; but I was made to talk, and he to think; every one in their humour, and life will be the better comedy. In short, there is no mending any one; the bad will not mend, the good need not. I cannot so much as mend my pen, though the subject is as passive as can be; but still the world goes on; for if one cannot

mend, one can spoil; so there is something to do: as, for instance, I could not make my pen any better should I therefore do nothing? no, I could make some paper worse by scrawling upon it: so mending or marring it is doing still. Your Grace will observe my letter was in a melancholy strain at the beginning; I ask your pardon; I was in the morning frightened, sick in body, weary in mind, and very vexatious in spirit; I have taken my dinner, and quelque peu de courage, am in better hope, the Speaker looks better, and I find chicken, pudding, and magnanimity, will fortify one a little against those ills a fasting stomach and a cowardly spirit cannot support. I see you laugh at me. Pray do! I desire no more than to be a jest, and especially for your Grace. I would not by any means be a melancholy reflection in your mind, or a tragical story in the mouth of any one; but to make my friends laugh is all I wish; I do all I can for that purpose; am inconsistent, whimsical, and all that mirth

and ridicule can desire; am nothing seriously, nor any thing constantly, but

Your Grace's

faithful, obedient,

grateful, and affectionate servant,

E. Robinson.

N. B. My eyes are very fine.

To the Same.

Sunday, October 11,——

Madam,

By Thursday's post your Grace, I hope received our acknowledgments, of your kind and obliging letters, which my mamma and I wrote the first post after they came to our hands. I am at present a little indisposed with a cold. I long to see my dear Lady Dutchess, and hope to find health as well as happiness at Bullstrode; but lately I have had a very odd constitution, however not bad enough to

make me more troublesome than I should be in better health. My mamma and the physician I have had here are inclined I should consult Dr. Mead as I pass through London, and my mamma presses it so much, I believe I must comply with it, else I should have liked a friend of ours in Dean-street, as well; but sure my letters grow like Lady W———, so I will say no more of myself. I owe your Grace millions of thanks for your delightful letters, which have been of infinite pleasure to me. I want to talk with you about Dr. Middleton's book. I am glad to find my taste agrees so well with your's; the second volume is much the most entertaining; what pleases me best is the last chapter, which contains an account of the ancient schools of philosophy, and of the different sects, out of which the Doctor has made a very excellent religious faith for Cicero, worthy of the great Creator, and of the wisest creature, with the advantage of his morality and the better influence it had on his conduct than the impracticable rules of the Stoicks, and

the loose and idle maxims of the Epicureans. This he particularly sets forth in a comparison between Cicero, Cato, and Atticus. I have picked up the account of the Life, &c. of Homer, and I believe your Grace will find entertainment in it: I hear the same author is going to publish an account of the Augustan age; the poor man has been very little rewarded for what he has wrote; some fame indeed he has acquired, perhaps too he may from his patron be promise crammed; but, as Hamlet says, you cannot feed capons so; wit is but a bubble, and it is only filled with air; it seldom grasps riches or power. Those that have no wit themselves, look upon it in another as an enemy; those that have, as a rival; few make it their acquaintance, fewer still their friend; however, it makes poverty honourable, and indigence respected. Honoured, praised, and happy are the ingenious, but seldom rewarded or enriched; fancy treats her children with golden dreams and happy deliriums; every man's land affords a landscape to the painter, a

description or simile for the poet; even in the mines he may dig for comparisons, though not for gold. He has diamonds at command of his mistress's eyes, rubies for her lips; nay, Homer, though hungry, thirsty, and a beggar, can feed his heroes and kings with whole bulls and heifers, give them to drink out of sculptured vases wrought in gold, and lodge them on sumptuous carpets, while himself continued to lodge perhaps on the ground! All here beg your Grace's acceptance of their compliments. My brother proposes to be inoculated as soon as the coach returns from me, which he will want to take the air in till the small-pox appears. Inoculation is begun in West Kent, about 20 miles from us, with great success.

I am,
my dearest Lady Dutchess's
most faithful
E. Robinson.

To Miss S. Robinson.

Bullstrode, October, 1741.

DEAR SISTER,

THIS morning I was roused by the arrival of your letter, which softened the pangs of waking so much, that I did not, as usual, sigh and groan at taking leave of my pillow. I am glad to find you are in such spirits as to be able to make a jest of our swains; indeed they are not worth one's serious consideration; yet sometimes I have made sad reflections upon them. I hope the Damons in Buckinghamshire pay more, and merit greater, attentions. We arrived on Sunday at the most charming place I ever saw; a very magnificent house, fine gardens, and a beautiful park. A part of the apartment I inhabit would make you and me a very comfortabe house in the state of our virginity, when we are poor old maidens. A philosopher, pretty much a stranger to me, as I don't remember his name, said to somebody,

who objected to the smallness of his room, that it was as large as he could fill with friends. By that rule ancient virgins may be content with scanty architecture; solitary, serious puss, being their constant companion, will not complain of narrow quarters. Old virginityship is certainly Milton's hell,

Where hope ne'er comes that comes to all.

For my part, it is my prudent resolution

To gather the rose of love while yet 'tis time.

I hope you likewise will make hay while the sun shines, or, to render the phrase the more polite and applicable, "Make lovers while eyes sparkle." The Duke and Dutchess talk of visiting the camp this week. If my heart falls a victim to scarlet, and I grow ambitious of a kettle-drum, I will inform you. I take it ill that you should think the road to my heart is through my eyes. If it be accessible it is by the rational inlet of hearing; and he who gains it must be rather fair spoken than fair

faced. Not that I dislike the comely addition of a handsome face. In my love accounts I don't undervalue any one circumstance, either of the goods of fortune, or of external favour. No merchant balances accounts with greater punctuality. I spent the last day I was in town with Mr. and Mrs. Freind. There is great satisfaction in conversing with those who are both deserving and happy. I hope Mr. Knight is well: he is in the foremost rank of my esteem, with his friend Sir John St. Aubin, and the immortal Mr. Widdrington.

I admire your classical life; what a variety does study make; what a difference between the rhetoric of Livy and that of our friend Mr. B——! How different is Mrs. P—— from Cornelia, and Mutius Scævola from the delicate Mr. C——! I dare say he thinks the stern hero would not have burnt off his arm, if he had been well stocked with Dresden ruffles, nor would little Reg: have lost his eye-lids if he could have ogled in the side box. Pray is our friend at Windsor

still? The Duke's library is not well furnished with Italian books, so that I have not been able to choose according to my inclination. The Dutchess is renewing her Italian, of which I am glad, for she has a very good taste, and will have good books whenever she makes the language her study. You must expect me to be an excellent preacher, in a little while, for we are to read Doctor Samuel Clarke's Sermons. Mr. Hay is an auditor, for he is not able to read aloud, and Mr. Achard is a translator of pronunciation, so that you would take his English to be French. The Duke hunts thrice a week, and has business, so that our invalid is glad to accept of a female lecturer. I thought you had known of Mrs. Freind's hierarchical disorder. How *Grace* multiplies! I mean no pun on my cousin's name. I have seldom an opportunity of sending you any news, for I hear very little. A match is talked of between Lady Caroline Fitzroy and the Marquis of Granby, and Lady Bell Fitzroy and Lord Brook. I don't know whether I sent

you word of the Duke of Somerset's daughter to Mr. Carteret.

I am, dear sister,
your's, most affectionately,
ELIZ. ROBINSON.

To Mrs. Robinson, her Mother.

Bullstrode, October the 20th, 1741.

MADAM,

I RETURN you many thanks for your directions for the apron, which I will carefully follow; as to the silver thread I do not approve the use of it, as all great artists work for immortality, and my sister will find a little time will tarnish her work if there is a mixture of silver in it; tell her from me she must expect all her praise from beauty, judgment, and art, and not from riches.

I honour Lord Sandwich for his wise and generous contempt of money in a point in which there are other things superior to it. He bears an excellent

character, and I dare say deservedly; there is much prudence in knowing how to separate one's particular happiness from that which is reckoned so in the world's opinion. If Lord Sandwich takes greater pleasure in the conversation of a fine woman than in viewing a collection of medals and pictures, he is in the right to prefer Miss Dolly Fane, with five thousand pounds, to Miss S——— with fifty. He has a good estate, sufficient for the becoming state of a nobleman; having necessaries, all acquisitions are to be of pleasure; therefore he is prudent to take what will afford him most; let it be in what shape it will. Miss Fane is a happy woman to have a lover, so great, so generous, so good. Love has a good right over the marriages of men, but not of women, for men raise their wives to their rank, women stoop to their husband's if they choose below themselves.

I do not wonder that old C—— and Mr. G—— should dispute about settlements: where there is no inducement but money, it is reasonable to make a good

bargain. I think all our neighbours are in a marrying humour: if I had seen any prospect of such a turn in their tempers, I would not have been so imprudent as to have left the country. I wish some of them had married two and twenty years ago; we should have had a gallant young neighbourhood, but they have lost time, and we have lost lovers by this delay.

I desire my duty to my papa, and love to my brother Matt.

I am, Madam,
your most dutiful daughter,
E. R.

END OF VOL. I.

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Cleveland-row, St. James's.

THE

LETTERS

OF

MRS. ELIZABETH MONTAGU,

WITH SOME OF THE LETTERS OF HER CORRESPONDENTS.

PART THE FIRST,

CONTAINING HER LETTERS FROM AN EARLY AGE TO THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE.

PUBLISHED BY

MATTHEW MONTAGU, ESQ. M. P.

HER NEPHEW AND EXECUTOR.

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1810.

MRS. MONTAGU'S LETTERS, &c.

To the Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Freind.

Bullstrode, Tuesday the 24th, 1741.

Two so united in my thoughts shall not be separated in my words, so my good cousins accept my salutations from the country. I took leave of our smoky metropolis on Monday morning, and changed the scene for one better suited to the season. The agreeable freedom I live in, and the rural beauties of the place, would persuade me I was in the plains of Arcadia; but the magnificence of the building, under whose gilded roofs I dwell, has a pomp far beyond pastoral. In one

thing I fall short of Chloe and Phillis, I have no Pastor fido, no languishing Corydon to sigh with the zephyrs, and complain to the murmuring brooks; but those things are unnecessary to a heart taken up, and sufficiently softened by friendship. Here I know Mrs. Freind and you shake your heads, and think a little bergerie a proper amusement for the country; but, in my opinion, friendship is preferable to love. The presence of a friend is delightful, their absence supportable; delicacy without jealousy, and tenderness without weakness, transports without madness, and pleasure without satiety. No fear that caprice should destroy what reason established; but even time, which perfects friendship, destroys love. I may now say this to you, who, from constant lovers, are become faithful friends. I congratulate your change; to have passed from hope to security, and from admiration to esteem. If you knew the charming friend I am with, you would not wonder at my encomiums upon friendship, which she makes one taste in

its greatest perfection. I have greater pleasure in walking in these fine gardens because they are her's; and indeed the place is very delightful. I am sorry to think I have lost so much sun shine in town. Society, and coal fires, are very proper for frost; but solitude and green trees for summer. Then the *care selve beate* come in season, and Philomel sings sweeter than Farinelli. The beasts of the field, and the birds of the air, are better company than the beau monde; and a butterfly and a magpye, in my opinion, are at all times better company than a fop or a coxcomb. It is the necessity of the one to be gaudy, and of the other to chatter; but where folly and foppery are by choice, my contempt must attend the absurdity. I like an owl, very often, better than an alderman; a spaniel better than a courtier; and a hound is more sagacious than a fox-hunter; for a fox-hunter is only the follower of another creature's instinct, and is but a second instrument in the important affair of killing a fox. I could

say a great deal more of them, if supper was not ready; so leaving you to balance their merits, and determine their sagacity, I must take my leave, only desiring my compliments to Mrs. Freind and the Doctor; if, at his years and wisdom, things so trifling as women, and compliments, can take any place in his remembrance. Pray let me hear from the writing half very soon; the husband is always allowed to be the head, and I think in your family he is the hand too. A letter directed to Bullstrode, by Gerrard's bag, will find and rejoice

your most faithful friend,
and affectionate cousin,

ELIZABETH ROBINSON.

*** This letter properly belongs to a former year, and to some previous visit to Bullstrode, but having no other date than Tuesday, 24th, the year cannot be ascertained. The date 1741, is added to recall to the reader the progress of the series.

To the Rev. Mr. Freind.

Bullstrode.

SIR,

I CANNOT describe to you the uneasiness and anxiety I suffered from your silence, nor the joy to be awakened from my melancholy dreams of you, by the pleasure of a letter, which assured me of the health and friendship of you and yours. My opinion of your good nature made me ascribe your silence to any thing but a neglect of telling me what would make me easy; and I hoped you knew my heart too well to think I could ever be so while I imagined my friends were ill. I assure you my not writing two letters for one, more immediately arose from no point of ceremony, but expectation of hearing from you; and want of leisure made me defer it till the time of your silence, joined to the report of my sister, who complained with more fear than anger of the same thing, gave me terrible apprehensions for you. And then I could

do it in no other manner than in that letter which was so long before it got to your hands. Your making no reply to it confirmed me in my fears; for I knew you could not forget a friend in affliction, nor deny a few words to restore them to their peace of mind. I spoke of my uneasiness to every body; and Mr. John Hay, who is with us, was so good as to tell me, if he had had any correspondents in that part of the world, he would have enquired after you. The Duke of Portland, who asked me once, to whom the seal you had made use of belonged, came into my apartment, about a week ago, with great joy and haste, saying he had got the letter I had been grieving for; upon which I snatched it out of his hand, when, to my inexpressible disappointment, I found it came from another hand. This morning he told me he was sure it was right; but I shook my head, and said I was afraid not; but this time the joy recompensed the chagrin I had suffered before. I wish Mrs. Friend and you much joy of what for a little while may be

rather troublesome; but I hope by future satisfaction she will find herself greatly recompensed for the present uneasiness. I thank you for your well meant wishes to me upon that head; but I have lately studied my own foibles, and I have found out I should make a very silly wife, and an extremely foolish mother, and so have as far resolved, as is consistent with deference to reason and advice, never to trouble any man, or spoil any children. I already love too many people in this world to enjoy a perfect tranquillity; and I do not care to have any more strings to pull my heart; it is very tender, a small matter hurts it, a great one would break it. I have been lately a little out of spirits about my incomparable Dutchess; she has been a good deal indisposed, but by bleeding and care she is much better, I wish I could say well. Her Grace has a friendship for me I can never find in any one else; nor indeed would it give me the same pleasure from any other person; because then I must be ungrateful, as it would be impossible for me to

love any one as I do her. The duty and love I owe at home will make me leave her next spring, but (which is a secret) I do not propose to do it before. No one can imagine the pain it will give me to do it then, but Pea. Her Grace can hardly bear I should mention leaving her. It would make those who are above the weaknesses of the heart, laugh to see us sometimes both betrayed into tears upon talking of it. What makes it more terrible to me is, that I find upon every uneasiness of mind or body she flies to me for comfort; her heart and constitution are of the tenderest sort; thank God, I leave her in the hands of the best of husbands, so I shall part with the melancholy satisfaction of thinking I leave her less unhappy than I go. We have often disputed which would be most miserable, and strive for the painful pre-eminence of misery as much as the ambitious could for that of greatness. All I have said upon this head is only to Mrs. Freind and yourself. Why should you rather advise me to embark upon the sea of fortune in a

wherry than in a ship? Are not shallows as dangerous as gulphs? Do not the sails, blown by the gale of prosperity, better stem the tide of the times than the little boat that depends upon the reflux of a little stream? The rich freight lies securely at anchor while the small fishing boat is forced to put out in stormy weather, barked at by the Charybdis of power, and perhaps swallowed by the Scylla of law. The lofty cedar is only shook by the storms of heaven; the ivy is trod by every passenger. Perhaps I am a Babelist, and would build to my confusion; but at present, I own, if I am to be bound to a vessel, I wish it may be a first rate. I have no schemes at present in my head, but be assured they will always be consistent as much with private happiness as public opinion. I shall wear no jewel at my heart whose intrinsic value does not far exceed the gold it is set in, for mercenary as what I have said may appear, I shall ever think wisdom is better than gold, yea, than much fine gold. If I could have given you any

satisfactory account of the person's return, I should not have made you wait so long for it, but here no one knows more than common report, which says he is to bring over the sister of the Prince of Hesse for a queen, and to leave Madame behind. This I take to be the invention of brains whose product would be quite lost if wonder and falsehood did not preserve it. You must know this family are but passive courtiers, and so know nothing of the secrets of ———. I wish your friends success in all their undertakings, and approve your not committing their intentions to paper, for certainly the trust of seals is too often violated. My letter was not opened, but having taken up some black wax, instead of red and gold, I hastily sealed with it, without knowing what I had done; when I perceived my mistake I covered it with the red for fear you should apprehend some misfortune had happened to our family. I had a letter this morning from my dear Pea, full of tender concern for you and Mrs. Freind; to-night I shall relieve her

anxiety by writing her word I have heard from you, but pray tell it her yourself. Lord and Lady O—— are here now; My-lord went down to Bath for a week, about three weeks ago, to see the place, and made a visit to my little cousin Robert, but the young gentleman was abroad. Have you conversed so long with the curious as not to know there is a difference between loving books and loving reading? How many buy books they do not care to read; others read books they do not care to buy. Some men are learned amongst the great, but many more of them may properly be said to be bookish. Where some sense, but more estate, "kind heaven to a well lotted peer has given," with money he purchases volumes, but seldom by industry acquires knowledge. They buy manuscripts who cannot write, and classics, though they cannot read; they empty their pockets without furnishing their heads, and by their search after knowledge, as well as Solomon, teach us that that also is vanity. I hope our friend, Master Robert, will

show us one day that he knows how to make the best use of books; I wish that by a thousand pleasures he may give you, he may make you as happy a father as you have been a dutiful son, and that the reciprocal delight of a good parent, and obedient and worthy child, may pass to another generation, as you and the Doctor have felt it in this. This, with all blessings, and the success of every wish you form, is the sincere and fervent prayer of your most faithful friend,

and affectionate cousin,

ELIZ. ROBINSON.

I ought to make apologies for the length of this letter, and for a thousand faults, too visible to you for it to be necessary to name them; but I beg you would burn it, least some accident should produce it to eyes less partial than your own. I shall be very glad to hear from Mrs. Freind, but would not, in her present state of health, put her to any pain to give me pleasure; assure her of my sincere respects. Mr. Hay desires I would

insert his compliments: I wish I could tell you he was recovered, but he has had two fits lately, and is but weak, I mean in body, in sense and patience strong.

To Mrs. Robinson.

Bullstrode.

MADAM,

I CANNOT help troubling you with letters sometimes, as you are so good as to let me hear from you, which I assure you, though perhaps you think I am entirely taken up with diversions, is a great pleasure to me. I heartily congratulate you upon your deliverance from the elegant Mr. B——— and the gormandizing Dean. We this day had an epicure to dine with us, who talked so much of eating, that his conversation gave me a dinner. The gentleman was just come from abroad, and declared he thought nothing he had met with in travelling equal to an haunch of

English venison, and that for his part he preferred England to any other country, because eatables of all sorts were here in the greatest perfection. He was so loquacious and so voracious it was impossible to determine whether he eat or talked most, but for two hours his unwearied employment was the praise and practice of eating. There was not a proverb which tended to this darling subject that he did not repeat; but though he practises gluttony himself he preaches abstinence to his family. One should imagine the daughters of an epicure would be better fed than taught, but that is not the case here; he prescribes lean meat and water, while he drinks wine and eats of the fat of the land. I never was in company with our dean but his conversation ran upon eating; he must certainly preach very bad fast sermons, but for the fatted calf, the quails, and manna in the wilderness, no man could make a better discourse upon them. Sir Hugh Smithson is married to Lady Betty Seymour, and Lady Betty Montagu to Sir

Danvers Osborn, that is all the news I hear. The Dutchess of Dorset has had fine presents upon going over with the Princess of Hesse; the Prince presented her with a gold tea-pot, tea-kettle and lamp, and Lady Caroline Sackville with a set of Dresden, and a diamond solitaire; the Dutchess had likewise a set of Dresden tea-cups and a service of Dresden china, and the King gave her a gold snuff-box with a thousand pound bank bill in it. The Duke and Dutchess of ———, according to the fashion of the times, are going to part, but I believe the cause is hatred of each other, not love of any one else. The Duke is come to frank our letters, and supper is on the table, so I can only add my compliments to all the family.

I am, Madam,

your most dutiful daughter,

E. Robinson.

To Matthew Robinson, Esq. her Father.

Bullstrode.

Sir,

If my time had concurred with my inclination to write to you, and my readiness to return thanks for the drawing, you would have heard from me long ago; the apron will be fit for a Dutchess if it is a tolerable imitation of the pattern: her Grace charges me to make compliments for her suitable to the occasion, which I should do, if I did not know you could imagine *mille gentillesses* that I cannot express; so please to dress up your thoughts in the elegant habit of your own phrase, and then they will be fit for the person and the occasion, proper for the most finished Dutchess and most finished apron. Lord ——— and George Vertue arrived here last night after a ramble, which the best geographer could hardly describe; they have been hunting church-yards, and reading the history of mankind upon grave-stones; a short his-

tory; but comprehensive of all the generality do, to be born and to die. Self-love orders that to be engraved in lasting characters which reason would wish to forget. Of what worth is remembrance without praise? Then the inscription humbly begs the gentle reader to weep because Tom-a-Stiles, born 1700, did nothing till he died, 1730, when he had nothing else to do. One may weep indeed to see men live idle, and die vain. If ever I have an inscription over me it shall be without a name; and only, Here lies one, whom, having done no harm, no one should censure, and having done no good, no one can commend; who, for past folly only asks oblivion. So shal my friends be discharged of neglect, and myself of partiality to my memory. Dr. Grey is employed in a work which is to make its appearance in public. You would not easily guess it, I believe; 'tis no perplexity upon mysteries, no refutation of the doctrine of transubstantiation, no explanation of the catechism, but a thing for which his serious qualifications do not seem very

fit; he is writing notes upon Hudibras; his dullness may be a proper ballast for doggerel; it is better, however, his stupidity should make jest dull, than serious and sacred things ridiculous; which, as far as false light could do with persons of giddy imagination, he might have done had he applied his goose quill again to controversy. To an honest good man as he is, it must be a sort of comfort, did he know it, that his folly was innocent. We are all shivering with the apprehensions of another hard frost: there was a terrible storm here on Saturday night. If I had the descriptive genius of a news writer I would give you a magnificent account of the damage the wind has done; but not having a hurly-burly imagination, nor a command of similes proper for a storm, I shall not be able (according to the phrase of one of our tragedians) "to deck my tale with decent horrors."

I am, Sir,
your most dutiful daughter,
E. Robinson.

To Miss S. Robinson.

Bullstrode.

DEAR SISTER,

IN the regions of plenty to complain of want is unreasonable, but I have no more paper than the sheet I am writing upon, and I cannot disturb the Duke to go into his library, for he is set down by the fire very comfortably, and the Dutchess is occupied in working a cushion; so that I do not like to make them remove, and still less to ask for the key of the Dutchess's escrutoire, as I think it is a thing people should only part with for their own convenience. You are very complaisant in saying you would read a book on my recommendation; but you would hold my heroes in contempt, who have only mustaches, while your Horatius Cocles, (a strong man he was,) and your Coriolanus, with the furious family of the Gracchi, have fine beards of an ell long: I do not think Mr. S——'s verses

will be much the worse for wear; so he may lay them up for his son. Pray are they entailed on the family, or did he rob old Time's foul bag of them? The verses upon C—— are admirable. I have known a brand lighted at a lady's eyes, but I never heard of a poker, tongs, and fire-shovel applied to them. As the gentleman loves a medley of godheads, he should have borrowed the tongs of Vulcan, or have robbed Prometheus, for I think he was a blacksmith. My laughter at the odd verses reminds me of the French proverb, "La poële se moque du fourgon," for I am quite as ridiculously celebrated as her Ladyship. I am sorry to find Phœbus decks no more Daphnes with laurel. Why will Laura make verses? I am tired of seeing roses and lilies envious, violets blush blue terribly, but there is no end of folly! Pegasus hates a side-saddle; Parnassus maintains the Salique law: what can we do? "Il ne tombe pas en quenouille."

Choose for our command,
Some peaceful province in acrostic land.

We may inspire verses, if we cannot write them. Some are fools for our sakes, others are witty for our honour. The advantages of these things cannot be set forth by inch of paper; a great genius and a little paper are terrible. Believe, I desire, that I suppress a thousand pretty things, and that for many well imagined, I conclude with one well affirmed, which is, that I am

your most affectionate sister,

E. R.

To the Same.

Bullstrode, November 24, 1741.

Dear Sister,

I am glad you liked my panegyric of vanity; really it was a pure motion of gratitude in me; as it was the only thing that ever recommended me to myself, I thought I was in duty bound to recommend it to others. Through it I have been pleased with the looking-glass,

reconciled to the echo, and made fond of pen and ink; take but this my indulgent friend and constant companion from me, I shall neither look, talk, nor write to my satisfaction. All things and circumstances it has represented favourably to me; flattery, it suggested, was truth, and censure was envy; kindness was the reward, malice the consequence of my merit; so content with myself I was pleased with every thing, despised all cross accidents as things below my desert, enjoyed all lucky ones as equal to it; happy to think I deserved happiness, even when I felt inconveniencies. To this indulgent vanity do I owe the hopes of some time acquitting my obligations to you, and the present imagination of deserving a third part of the love you have for me. When this passion, so decried in reputation, has so enhanced my virtues, covered my faults, increased my pleasures, and allayed my pains, shall I leave it to be demolished by its enemy and mine, humility, which has ever been setting me at variance with myself,

always finding faults in my person or understanding, and drawing caricatures of me, making me see I deserved very little of my own esteem, and none at all of yours? Sure no one has more reason to quarrel with it, as there is no one to whom it has made ruder remonstrances. An unmannerly companion, as it is, let it be fed upon pulse and water, and clothed in sackcloth and ashes. Higher feeding puffs up vanity, and will expel humility presently. It will no more pass through brocade, than a witch will step over a horse-shoe. Riches and titles, with a little good opinion mixed up with flattery, and shook together once a day, will cure the most stubborn fit of humility. But you will not join with me in my resentment against humility; for as a servant of truth it is a friend to you: therefore I will spare it, and only wish its visits to me may not be too long or too frequent, but that,

Dear vanity, I may live with thee
In unreproved pleasures free.

It has lengthened my letter, and now comes in at the conclusion, for my vanity is never stronger or happier, than when I subscribe myself, what I am vain of being, my dearest,

your most affectionate sister,
and sincere friend,
E. Robinson.

To the Same.

Bullstrode.

My dear Sister,

My spirits have been of late so indifferent that they have made me a very bad correspondent. To-night they are better, for the Dutchess is as well as one could expect, and Mr. Hay, who has had a fit, is much recovered. The trial of the witch is very extraordinary; I read it many years ago, when I rather wondered that such things could be done, than believed they were only reported. But I am now

well convinced a woman is never reputed a witch till she has done being so. You would laugh to see how formally Lord Bacon accounts for the witchcraft of eyes, either by love or malice. He has lately been amongst our studies, and I plainly see lovers understand that affair much better than sages. The heavenly rhetoric of the eye, against which the world cannot hold argument, can no more be described than resisted by wisdom; but honour, wealth, and wit and beauty, to the power of love submit. The strength of Sampson, the valour of Hercules, and the wisdom of Solomon could not escape it. What then may the Dalilahs and Omphales of this age do with the puny-modern beaux! Many of them are, like larks, best caught with a looking-glass. The representation of them may not please you, though it does themselves, so I will leave them, and desire you to return my best thanks to my papa for his letter, and the favour of his pattern. I like your study in Italian much better than my own; but we have no good

Italian books here, so I read rather for the language than the subject. A tale in verse is a mere story in prose. Boccace is reckoned a very elegant writer as to style, but a bagatelle is a bagatelle, let the envelope be what it will. I wish Lady T. B.—— would produce her mouse, or deliver Sandys, if she will not let him deliver her. I have not been at Windsor Assembly yet, nor indeed have I any prospect of it at present, for my Lady Dutchess's confinement will make her very tender. One of the families to whom I did the honours of the house, were of the drollest sort. I will only tell you their names, which were Basil, Ball, and Garlic; all description must fall short; they are originals of which no copy can be taken, and are beyond all jest. Sir W—— is a clown; no red waistcoat ever contained a more errant country squire; he is as heavy as the Sunday's pudding that smokes upon his hospitable board. But I must end my letter,

and am ever affectionately your's,

Eliz. Robinson.

To the Rev. Mr. Freind.

SIR,

I AM sorry fate is so much my enemy as to interpose her decrees against your writing to me with the same readiness of performance as of inclination. I was indeed a little surprised to hear a divine had seduced a captain; I fancy your engagement was over in less time than you imagined, if the conversation was to be only my panegyric; for upon making a favourable account of my good qualities and all that partiality, compliment, and imagination could say upon them, I really think half an hour would amply take in all that could be devised and said upon the subject; I am very sorry if the poor man is really what you think, unhappy; if his case is uneasy I am sure it is desperate. Complaint, I hope, is more the language, than misery the condition of lovers. To speak ingenuously, you men use us oddly enough; you adore the pride, flatter the vanity, gratify the ill nature,

and obey the tyranny that insults you; then slight the love, despise the affection, and enslave the obedience that would make you happy. When frowning mistresses we are awful goddesses; when submissive wives, despicable mortals. There are two excellent lines which have made me ever deaf to the voice of the charmer, charmed he ever so sweetly,

> The humblest lover, when he lowest lies,
> Submits to conquer, and but kneels to rise.

Flattery has ever been the ladder to power, and I have detested its inverted effects of worshipping us into slavery while it has pretended to adore us to deification. If ever I commit my happiness to the hands of any person it must be to one whose indulgence I can trust, for flattery I cannot believe; I am sure I have faults, and am convinced a husband will find them, but wish he may forgive them. But vanity is apt to seek the admirer rather than the friend, not considering that the passion of love may, but the affection of esteem can never degenerate to dislike.

I do not mean to exclude love, but I mean to guard against the fondness that arises from personal advantages. This may be distinguished from the consent of the mind to a joint admiration of the virtues and beauties of a mistress; for though they both pretend alike the admiration of the united qualifications, yet it is necessary to recollect whether the eyes did not choose for the mind. I have known many men see all the cardinal virtues in a good complexion, and every ornament of a character in a pair of fine eyes, and they have married these perfections, which perhaps, might shine and bloom a twelvemonth, and then, alas! it appeared these fair characters were only written in white and red. A long and intimate acquaintance is the best presage of future agreement. I have strengthened this argument to myself by the example of you and Mrs. Freind, I hope, in my long and tedious dissertation, I have said nothing disrespectful of love. As for your particular inducement to it, I cannot tell whether it was beauty or good

qualities, they being united in her in a degree of perfection not to be excelled; but though in degree equal, not being equal in kind, I am sure the qualities of the mind had preference as the most worthy. Your description of your friend is very amiable, but indeed the qualities you commend are enough to render what you mention both improbable and unfit; ambition hardly makes concessions to love, and is ever subject to repent the purchase, even of content, at the expense of greatness. Its wishes are rather for pomp than happiness. For what you would effect, you should find one rather tired of than desirous of greatness, who having found seeming good dearly purchased at the rate of real enjoyments, would be willing to reverse the bargain, and buy happiness at the expense of show. So to your worthy friend, according to his desert, I wish riches and alliance to help his laudable ambition. For myself, I wish the same advantages with one of established fortune, and character so established that one piece of generosity should not

hurt his fortune, nor one act of indiscretion prejudice his character; for I would hardly be advanced to the detriment of an enemy, much less to the disadvantage of a friend.

I am

your's, &c.

E. Robinson.

To Mrs. Donnellan.

Bullstrode, Dec. 2.

Dear Madam,

You, who know that Time is double winged, and curls up his forelock toupet-fashion at Bullstrode, will not be surprised that I have not wrote to friends and sisters as I ought; but indeed I have been dumb with a sore throat, and the shock of so unusual a distemper took away all power of writing; and though my friends here were sensible I was much improved by the accident, I took it

grievously to heart. One would not part with one's darling folly for the finest accomplishment, or best qualification in the world; and truly, till my tongue could fidget, and my voice pronounce ten thousand words in five minutes, I was quite low spirited. I read dialogues, studied well penned narrations, read whole books of question and answer, and in short meddled with no work that was not entitled a discourse upon something or other. But these were but the shadows of the felicity of prating. However, I am at last restored to the substantial bliss of talking all day long; and now in good health and high spirits enjoy the agreeable society here. Madam Pen is copying Sacharissa's picture from Vandyck, and does it with that felicity of genius that attends her in all her performances. I believe, could Waller see it, he would begin to make new verses on her, and ask of the picture, as he does of the image of his dream,

Where could'st thou find
Shades to counterfeit that face?

If Sacharissa could have known the Stella* of a future age would have copied her picture, I should not have blamed her for sitting for it; but for her, who knew not such future honours would attend her, to sit to a mercenary artist after she had been so pourtrayed in never-dying verse, and to wish to give any other impression of her face, was ill judged. The lover and the poet make the fairest and most beautiful representations; from Vandyck you judge she was a pretty woman; from Waller you imagine she was a charming goddess; and surely immortal verse is the Elysium of vanity.

Mrs. Delany brought us the good news of your being well, and I shall this week ask you in person how you do, and hope you will confirm the good account I heard of your health. Miss Dashwood left us two days ago, and Miss Parsons arrived here yesterday; Miss Granville, I fear, departs to-morrow, on account of Mrs. Foley's coming to her at Windsor: this is the present state of Bullstrode. I need

* Mrs. Pendarvis is here mistaken for the real Stella.

not tell you I am very happy here; you know the persons that compose this society, and my regard for them, too well to doubt of it; and indeed I am still more happy in seeing the Dutchess in better health and spirits than ever I knew her. Bullstrode is much improved without doors; peace, cheerfulness, and joy, were always within: so that new furniture and fine pictures hardly make an addition to its former charms. I hope you will go to the play with me very often. All rational entertainments are improved by your company; and I think the plays may now be ranked in that class. Let us contrive to spend a good deal of time together, and not run to drums and routs; for my part I hate drums, civil and military. A pacific tête-à-tête is much better. It is a most unreasonable thing to give up all one's time to people one does not like, merely because their footman brings one a card, and they light ten candles instead of two: after that can one laugh at the fool that loses his time and his way, with following

will o'the wisp? I will follow illuminations no longer, but try rather to be guided by the light of reason to the company I like, than by the blaze of wax-lights to the house I do not; so expect me in your dressing room as constant as your India cabinet, and as chatty as your parrot. Pray how does Dr. Courayer do? Has he got rid of his cold? Say some kind things for me, most generous rival. Make my compliments to Mrs. Clayton and the Bishop,* and to whoever enquires after me.

I am, dear Madam, &c. &c.

E. Robinson.

To the Rev. Mr. Freind.

December 29,——

Sir,

Your letters are always welcome to me, whether they congratulate me upon my happiness, or inform me of your health.

* Of Clogher.

I am now resolved to write you a long letter, while I am your plain, downright, country cousin, before I have breathed the London air, or have lost the least part of my Arcadian sincerity and sobriety. I don't know whether it is not conceited to imagine, you will like me better while I am most myself, than when I am moulded by fashion into other people's form; the thought seems suggested by self-love, and therefore should appear suspicious to me, but I have always accustomed myself to appear to you without those disguises which we wear as ornaments with our acquaintance, and as armour with our enemies. But amongst friends, truth may appear with no other clothing than la bienséance. I shall certainly read Philippe de Comines as soon as I have an opportunity, and shall receive a double satisfaction in my entertainment and improvement, by knowing I owe it to you. I hope you will not suffer your diffidence to be so much my enemy, as to hinder your advising me in what you shall at any time think proper for me to

read; which, though it should be the terror of our sex, a folio, I would do with the encouragement of your recommendation. I was much entertained with a book I read lately, *l'Histoire du Ciel*. There is implanted in us a love of truth, and we are always pleased with any appearance of it, especially if it enlightens objects upon which time has thrown a veil of darkness. Perhaps you, who have found Apollo easy, ready, and gentle, will hardly be brought to change him for the laborious Horus; but for my part, I was so pleased to find the inexorable cruel Fates, gentle spinsters like myself, that I could not deny myself the satisfaction of belief; indeed, I was sorry to divest Minerva of peace and wisdom, but was comforted with the thought, that, like Ulysses, I had bound Proteus, and listened to the Sirens without being deluded: like Hercules I relieved the shoulders of Atlas, and as Diana, set at nought the frivolous bolt of Cupid. I crossed the Styx, and was not frightened at the barking of Cerberus, but wandered with pleasure in

the Elysian fields: in my return I found the Phœnix' nest, and looked at the Gorgon without terror. This clue to the labyrinth of mystery seems to lead to truth; but how many years was it before it regained its empire over fiction, which had so absolutely reigned in its stead? I was glad to see that even the greatest crime of mankind, idolatry, was error, and not perverseness; and that those religious rites were the effect of gratitude to the great dispenser of blessings, or the equitable orders of society. But how necessary is it that we should recommend every thing we do to the care of Providence, since the institution of piety and justice, may, by human ignorance and folly, become a stumbling block unto nations, and an abomination unto the Lord, as the heathen worship was declared to be. I have read Davila in the native beauties of his own language, and am glad to find my opinion of him agree with yours. What can one say of those things which never become more comprehensible by being common? I could

never find out why many people that have a great deal of sense in themselves, should not distinguish it in persons or books. Were it the unhappiness of only a few to judge amiss in these things, one might ascribe it to prejudice or passion, or bad education; but it is so usual that one finds it in excellent minds without any of those preventions; and of ten wise persons one shall not find five judicious in these matters. I believe it is of great consequence to young people to read none but the very best authors, which will not be the case of the women while French trumpery is so much the fashion among them; the acquisition of that language being looked upon as a great benefit, without considering the quirks and the quiddities they study for it. The ingenious and admired St. Evremond splits a difference into such nice distinctions, and is often so enamoured with points, and antitheses, that I am almost afraid to trust myself with him. Among mean critics, the word-catcher that lives on syllables, does not appear so

despicable to me as the vile quibbler that sets them at variance, and from their strife composes a piece, as atheists make a world from the jar of atoms. Next Sunday I quit the peaceful groves and hospitable roof of Bullstrode, for the noisy, turbulent city; my books and serious reflections are to be laid aside for the looking-glass and curling-irons, and from that time I am no longer a Pastorella, but propose to be as idle, as vain, and as impertinent as any one. If you will come to town, Mrs. Freind and you will find me, however, still so like myself as to be your sincere friend: but I shall trouble you with a good deal of my company, which you must take as the troublesome consequence of my esteem. I am much chagrined about my dear Pea, there is great danger of her being confined to the country for this year. Alas! It is a disappointment as to London, and, what is worse, our separation will be continued by it. I hoped to have enjoyed her and my dear Duchess, at the same time; but why did I hope it, when I knew there

was no perfect happiness to be expected? Pleasures are purchased or paid with pain. I must take leave of a most amiable friend before I can see this dear, this charming sister; the thought of parting with the one and meeting the other, gives me great grief and pleasure, that sometimes, as you apply songs to me,

> My face is like the April morn
> Clad in a winter's cloud.

My joy in seeing my sister will be such as I cannot think of without transport, and what pleasure is there in knowing I shall give her as much pleasure as I receive from her! Mutual affection is the felicity of love. I am glad that, of all blessings Providence has most lavishly bestowed upon me, that of friendship, for as I am most sensible to it, I am most thankful for it. Riches would not have made me so happy; they may purchase some moments of joy, but cannot years of content. A good friend alleviates every affliction, and soothes every care. I have been particularly fortunate

too in finding the best friends where nature's law directed, in my brothers and sister. My brother Robinson is at Cambridge now, I hope to see him in town soon after my arrival.

I have said a great deal of myself, but as I could not talk of a greater friend of your's, I hope it may be excused. I am glad my dear cousin was not hurt with the fright she was put into by the cry of Fire! I applauded her concern for her little boy. Our sex can have a care for others superior to fear for themselves, so their timorousness is not grounded upon the mean foundation of self-love, but rather that not being by education conversant with danger, they don't know how to make a right estimate of it; and therefore do not always properly proportion their apprehension to the occasion. I hear the Irish Adonis, Mr. Smith, is going to be married to Lady L——y W——th; Cupid always seemed to me a blunderer, and I begin to think he is Irish; he shoots no arrows but for that nation. I am very sorry for what you

tell me concerning Miss G——; it is hard she should suffer from merit, and for a friend. It is envy working upon folly which must have said what you tell me; I am sorry to be the occasion of her vexation, it is very unjust to every person whose name was used in it, they having all too much honour and prudence to act in that manner. Supper is upon table, or I should say more upon this head. As for your friend, of whom I know nothing, I can say nothing. Your esteem convinces me he is deserving and happy, and so shall leave him; and for myself I desire to remain, as I am,

your most sincere friend,

and obliged humble servant,

E. Robinson.

To the Same.

Bullstrode.

SIR,

FOR better things known in you than laziness, I shall so far respect that, as to address another letter to it, though my last lies unanswered. I am afraid the gentleman you went with to the tavern talked so much of me you have had quite a surfeit of me, and have been endeavouring to forget me ever since. By being blotted from your memory, I have avoided, perhaps, the greatest danger I ever was in of being vain, which I should have been shrewdly tempted to had I been much in your thoughts. I have thus far gone in a lofty style, so that I really believe you begin to think Eliza is in a downright passion; but that is not the case; her heart is warm with affection for her friends at all times, but never with anger: I have made excuses for your idleness you would not make yourself. I have made pleasure your excuse,

or business, or the constant employment of your life, the discharge of some duty: or suppose you only did not care to write to me, I could not with reason be angry at the omission. When you did it was a favour; when you do not it can be no transgression. The only thing that makes me wonder that you do not write to me is, that you (contrary to your general maxim, and rule of acting) lose an opportunity of conferring an obligation. If you received most pleasure by the correspondence, I should not be surprized at your neglecting it; but as I am made most happy by it, I expected you would be more constant in it. The most excellent Pea* is well; I had a letter last post, which seemed to come from her cheerfulness of heart; I am sure it gave much to mine. You say you are glad of news; I wish I could send you some; but Solomon, and your humble servant, who think vastly alike (I don't know whether you ever observed the resemblance,) are of opinion

* A name given to her sister on account of their resemblance.

there is nothing new under the sun. A few marriages are talked of; first, Sir Thomas Robinson and Lady Caernarvon, and Felton Hervey and Mrs. Pitfield. I hope there is some truth in the first. Lady Caernarvon is very rich; I know nothing more of her indeed, and dare not ask after her qualifications, for fear of being thought to ask a question mal-à-propos. I cannot add much to the length of this, for I am going to preach elsewhere; the Dutchess and Mrs. Pendarvis are expecting me above to read a sermon, which, as unfashionable as it is, I have the courage to own amongst friends; but were it known in the beau monde, what would they say! I hope Mrs. Freind is well; make my compliments, or say what to another might be so, and truth and I will defend it to her; it supports me too in assuring you that I am always,

Sir,

your very sincere friend,

and obliged humble servant,

Eliz. Robinson.

To Miss S. Robinson.

Bullstrode.

My dear Sister,

A cruel, barbarous post-boy, robbed me of your letter for awhile, but at last, ashamed to detain so much happiness from me, restored it in the good company of another of your's of later date. I know you are no friend to motion, but remember exercise is the means of health. My chief exercise is laughing; but whenever the weather permits I take a wholesome bleak walk round a terrace; if Master Boreas revels there too violently, I content myself with a lower situation. Mrs. Pendarvis and I walked out together this morning for about an hour, and happily beguiled the time by talking of our sisters, and the comfort of sisterly friendship. It would have tempted the envy of any one to whom fortune had denied such felicity, to have heard us. I look upon you so much as a part of

myself, that my affection for you is as self-love. I hope you will make a husband as happy as you have made a sister, and that in return, he will know your virtues as well, and reward them better, than I am able to do. Miss G—— is, by her precious brother, Lord W——, turned out of doors without a shilling; he is going to retrieve his estate, and this is his first act of economy! I cannot give you much account of our Buckinghamshire swains. I have seen none but a Mr. Mordaunt, Mr. Bateman, Lord Foley, the Bishop of St. Asaph, and Mr. St. Quintin, son to Sir William, but he is my own countryman. I have been at Windsor to see the Miss Granvilles, the late Lord Lansdown's daughters; and the Dutchess has promised to carry me to see the Castle. I assure you I sent the exact size of the marble table which is said to be worth a thousand pounds; it is beautiful as agate, of a prodigious thickness, and four feet broad. When I was last in town I passed great part of my time with Mrs. Freind. I found her surrounded by her husband's

relations, and had like to have made some unhappy jest upon a ghost in cherry colour, who, it seems, was a cousin. I was not so uneasy about that, because I could philosophically have proved that without flesh and blood there can be no kindred, and this poor creature had hardly any of either. Mr. B——'s wife too was there, and put out her strength to be witty, and in short showed such a brilliant genius, that I turned about and asked who it was that was so willing to be ingenious: for she had endeavoured to go off two or three times, but had unhappily flashed in the pan. The Dutchess desires her compliments to you. I am a perfect good Christian, and return good for evil; for if your letters awake me, mine will set you to sleep. So recommending you to your pillow, after this fatigue, I take my leave.

Adieu, my dearest sister,

E. Robinson.

To the Same.

Bullstrode.

My dearest Sister,

I ought to ask many pardons for not having written to you by the last post; indeed the desire of employing my eyes in your service occasioned my extreme caution of them. They are now better, and my whole constitution is repairing, notwithstanding all that fear and chagrin have been doing against it. When they are overcome, I shall enjoy the pleasures of Bullstrode with a happier mind; we have an agreeable family, and cheerfulness reigns in every heart but mine; but I have not yet reconciled myself to this inoculation. Last night being the birthday of the noble Admiral Vernon, we drank his health at noon, and celebrated the same with a ball at night. The Gunfleet was danced in honour of him, and celebrated with extreme joy, and a splendid distribution of crowns to the fidler, who was not the son of Orpheus; but

however he made such a difference between tit for tat and a minuet, that one might understand which he meant. Mademoiselle Du Four had the honour of standing up instead of a flower pot, or an elbow chair, and she danced like the daughter of Herodias. I hear Mr. L—— and his deary are as happy as Lord and Lady ——. La vieille Princesse de l'Isle des Cousins will be as necessary for peace and meditations as Cardinal Fleury. I do not hear what is the impediment to their happiness, but I guess it is Othello's complaint. The world is mad, I think, "Such pains they take, to get a husband or a wife to hate." Content has too much sameness in it. Men and women will sell their birth-right for a mess of any porridge fortune can make them.

I am glad to find you are well and in good spirits, notwithstanding the melancholy change you have made from populous cities to unpeopled meadows. I would advise you to begin a course of natural philosophy, and get acquainted with your fellow-citizens, the grass-

hoppers. I assure you the Dutchess and I intend to become speculative, and read the Spectacle de la Nature, with a treatise on butterflies. As for the tawdry human butterflies, they are not worth studying; for no microscope has yet been invented to discover their brains; and the object is too minute, I fear, ever to be rendered visible. I have the pleasure of seeing a beau here very often, and I cannot help wishing myself deaf whenever I am in his company; but now my judgment gives my fancy the lie, every time I begin to be pleased with him. All our senses are the avenues of pain as well as of pleasure, and I dare say Handel has suffered as much pain from an hum-strum, as ever he received delight from a violin or an harpsichord. Then, as to the nose, every thing in nature at some times has an ill savour, and a very small part of the creation smells sweet. To make a true estimate of the sweet and ill savours of vegetables, which are the sweetest things in nature, one need but take a walk through Covent-Garden, and one should

soon perceive the prevalence of cabbage stalks over the roses and jonquils. You will think, perhaps, after this, I have a desire to part with some of my senses; but in my present situation I find them well entertained. Pray beg my papa to send me some of the flowers of your apron for the Dutchess. Adieu,

your's most affectionately,

E. Robinson.

To the Same.

Bullstrode.

My dearest Sister,

Your account of the ball gave me great pleasure. I am sorry Mrs. S——, to whom you are obliged for your diversion, should suffer for the part she took in it; but assemblies and the grand climacteric do not agree together. The pomps, but not the vanities of the world, may suit with age. Indolence with dignity, according to Lord Halifax's motto, may comport

with grey hairs, but the summer suit of lighty vanity, should be laid aside in the winter of age. In your letter you hurry Lady R——m about from place to place as if she was as portable as Mrs. W——d. Mr. Grenville, one of the Prince's court, dined with us to-day; he is a polite, agreeable, good-natured man; we went together to Mr. Waller's, where he was to sleep to-night. He invited the Dutchess to come to see him, and to make a tour to Lord Cobham's, Oxford, &c. to which the Dutchess is well inclined. I suppose you had an account of a masque at Cliefden on the Princess Augusta's birth-day: The story of Alfred, by Thompson and Mallet. Mr. Grenville commends it, and says it will be published. I do not give much credit to his judgment, as I rather think he commends it as a patriot than as a critic. Bayes's stewed prunes, with other lenitives, might be administered to Thompson's genius, while astringents might be applied to Sir Philip Sydney's imagination. I am as fatigued with his hero's adven-

tures as if I had rode behind him. He out-Quixote's Quixote; knights, brave or miscreant, are unhorsed; ladies, fair or foul, chaste or wicked, fall in love with him: between the lance of Mars, and the arrow of Cupid, no age or sex escape him unhurt. Then the fair Princess bathing for the good of the public! I took great care no such accident should happen at Mary-le-bone. Lord Dupplin wrote a copy of verses on my going into the bath, which we impute to Sandys, to his great amazement. He says he does not know who wrote them, but thinks he is very sure he did not. Every one is in wrath at Sir John Norris's return. The Duke went to sea only to clear his stomach; he has been very sick, but is come home safe. I hope the next expedition will be in mackarel season, and then we shall take something. I hope the glorious Vernon will perform some great exploit alone. All the ladies in Suffolk give place to Mrs. Vernon, even those of the highest rank. I would have him made a peer at his return. Viscount Porto-Bello

would sound well. What a temptation did you resist, for my sake, in the charming conversation you mention! I can make you no such sacrifice at present, but when Dr. Green is here, I will leave even puns for your sake; friendships shall triumph over conundrums. When Dr. Young comes, whom I expect soon, I will not only hear, but I will write. I wish for his coming, as I hear he is very agreeable; and indeed his private character is excellent. He sends his compliments to me when he writes to the Dutchess, and says he is perfectly well acquainted with me; but that is the vision of a poet, for I never saw him in my life; but he is so kind as to commend me and all my works in all places. If we cannot get panegyrized by those who know us, we are glad of being praised by those who do not. My duty and love at home, from your most affectionate sister,

E. R.

To the Same.

Bullstrode, 1741.

My dear Sister,

The sons of Apollo haunt this place much; the tuneful Green is gone, but the poetical Dr. Young is with us; I am much entertained with him; he is a very sensible man, has a lively imagination, and strikes out very pretty things in his conversation; and though he has satirized the worst of our sex, he honours the best of them extremely, and seems delighted with those who act and think reasonably. I believe he has satirized that composition of oddity, affectation, and folly, which is called a pretty sort of a woman. If any one wishes to assume that character, they have only to pervert their sense, distort their faces, disjoint their limbs, mince their phrases, and lisp their words, and the thing is done. Grimaces, trite sentences, affected civility, forced gaiety, and an imitation of good nature, complete the character. Your reproof

for my fear about my brother is very just, and I know not why I did not take the reasonable side of the question. Philosophy and prophecy come generally après coup. Reason determines our arguments, but passion governs our actions. What pity that sentences, systems, and definitions, should give way to cribbage! but two Dutchesses command my presence. The Dutchess of Kent came here yesterday; she is a very sensible and polite woman. Poor Dr. Young has got a terrible cold, to my great mortification for he is hoarse, and can hardly be heard. A wise man of three-score loses a great deal by being only seen.

Adieu, my dearest sister,

E. R.

To the Same.

Bullstrode, 1741.

DEAR SISTER,

IF you, who have none of the vices, faults, or follies Doctor Young lashes, are angry with him, how will the ill-natured, whose malice he has satirized, abuse him! Pride and anger will rise in self-defence against him; let but the virtues he has praised espouse him (and that is no more than justice), and you will find yourself his greatest friend. I have sent you Mr. Nugent's ode; it is a very good composition for any poet; but when I consider it as the performance of a beau, I am surprized. I did not think the quintessence of all the beaux in Christendom could have written it:

> That Cato lived, that Tully spoke,
> That Brutus dealt the god-like stroke,

I thought the dear creatures did not know; and for

The partial judge perverting laws,
The priest forsaking virtue's cause,
And senates slaves to gain;

they did not care, if the tailor and the peruke maker did but perform their duty. You know I always said there were some brilliant sparks of wit in Mr. Nugent's conversation, but, like Mr. Tinsel, he sometimes laughs to shew his wit, and sometimes his teeth: I never suspected, till I saw this correct performance, that he was endued with so much judgment. We have a noble convocation of clergy here; Dr. Young and the Dean of ——— are very different characters, of different genius, and consequently often of different opinions in argument. We are entertained and instructed by their disputes, which are upon many grave subjects, particularly metaphysics and morality. Doctor Young maintains his superiority in all abstracted subjects, and is the man of speculation; but to give a notion of the world, and to point the motives of action of the ambitious and busy part of mankind, the little

courtier excels. Dr. Young has only studied himself, and in himself has found wisdom, integrity, benevolence, and candour; but for intrigue and cabal he is utterly unacquainted with it. I think it is fortunate for Mr. M—— that you have given him a little respite from dancing in this hot weather: really you are a bad economist to waste lovers at that rate. Why! you would wear a thin man to the bone in a week, and a fat man would distil as if he were in an alembic; and let me tell you, a beau might make a sort of puppy dog water very good for the complexion. The Dutchess of Marlborough, and a few of the million of Trevors, were here yesterday, and to-morrow we are to have Mrs. Tatton and her daughters. Do not forget to tender my duty to my papa, mamma, and affection to my brothers.

your affectionate sister,

E. R.

To the Same.

Bullstrode, 1741.

My dear Sister,

For the benefit of my constitution I starved myself in the north wind this morning till one, then for the good of my spiritualities, I attended chapel till half after one, and from that time till two, employed myself in the necessary decorations of my person. Then I was summoned to follow the call of nature and the dinner-bell to the dining-room, where having eat as if I were no goddess, though the poet laureat of Canterbury says j'en vaux trois, and having drunk, or rather, as celestials say, quaffed a glass of Madeira, my spirits were not elevated above the weight of ham and chicken till an hour after dinner, and then I proposed to write; but Doctor Young came in and entertained my mental faculties "with a feast of reason and a flow of soul," till six, and left me a

notion or two which I could not digest till tea came in: and whether the warm water relaxed the obstinacy of my former opinion or no, I cannot tell, but at last I understood all very clearly, and am come down to write just before the hour of cribbage, at which I have got great applause as a genius, and it being the first time I ever acquired fame in the way of cards, I am not willing to lose this new and considerable part of my character. I think I have sent you my journal, and cannot help thinking, now I am compared to Minerva, of Swift's verses, "Pallas grew vapourish and odd," for some of my employments are of the same importance as cutting paper: indeed, for me you should read blot paper rather than cut paper. I have not had a line from my brother Robert. I propose writing to Morris as soon as I think he will be in town; indeed, I have been very remiss of late, but I fancy you must be tired of having so many letters in the family. I must obey the high behests of the Dutchess; cribbage is the word;

believe me I would rather write to you than get the knave or twenty in crib; in spite of fifteen two, fifteen four, and a pair six, my thoughts are with you.

E. Robinson.

To the Same.

Bullstrode.

My dear Sister,

I was ashamed, sorry, disappointed, and an hundred other things, that the remiss and lazy deserve to be, that I could not write to you last post. My inclination to write to you is well known; so that I need not assure you the omission was not by choice. The truth was, my eyes not being well, I was reduced to have a blister on my back. Well may it bend to such a weight of calamity! The punishments of sinful mortals generally fall on the rear. The ill-bred man is kicked, the pilfering soldier, the transgressing nymph, the idle vagabond,

all receive lashes on the back. We are now a small family in comparison of our usual number. The Duke, Mrs. Pendarvis, Lord George, and Mr. Green, are all gone to Town, the gentlemen for the birth-day, and do not return till Sunday. We are now quite a little party, but as cheerful as if we had a whole world to laugh with. Indeed we have it to laugh at, which is a safer amusement. Your description of the ball and supper is excellent. It was all à la daube. I am glad you went away before the scene of the shambles was opened. To be sure, our friend thought he was making a carrion entertainment for my Lord Thanet's hounds. Thomas Diafoirus, who asked his mistress to see a dissection, did not offer a more absurd entertainment than this feast of mangled limbs. The Dutchess of Kent and Dr. Young have long left us. You would like Dr. Young; he has nothing of the gall of satire in his conversation, but many pretty thoughts, and a particular regard for women when they are good. I have laid aside the

Arcadia till Mrs. Pendarvis comes, who is fond of it, and the Dutchess and I have agreed that she shall read it to us. I have been quite tired of the hero ever since I caught him napping. I believe I mentioned the famous mask of Alfred to you in my last; it is now published. In the first scene, I stumbled into a gulphy pool, and a trembling quagmire; it is a sublime piece of nonsense, with very few good things in it. I have not read it all, but I have made no impatient enquiries after it. I think the plot seems not unlike Gustavus Vasa, a hero in distress, whose je ne scai quoi heroical fashion, in taking a walk, or sitting down on a bank, betray an air of majesty that you know may be a compliment to our countrymen, to shew how sagacious they are; or that, like lions, they can smell the blood royal; but no instinct of that sort, except Sir John Falstaff's, has ever pleased me. When I am pretty well, I go into a tub of cold water. My dreams are not like those of the Persian Monarch in the Spectator, or I would send you them. By a

violent hurry in my head I find I am not in my element, but ever desire to resemble Lord G——, who complains of being a goose out of water.

I am, my dear sister,
your's most affectionately,
ELIZ. ROBINSON.

To the Same.

Bullstrode.

MY DEAR SISTER,

I HAD no letter from the last post, for which I have blamed the post-boy, and every thing between this place and Horton. To-morrow I hope to have a letter from you, I had many in my sleep; for I dreamt of you all night, and was mortified in the morning to find myself a loser by being awakened. I have sent you the leaves, but fear they will not please you; I copied them as well as I could, and wish you had every day some commands for

me, that I might always have something to do which I should perform with pleasure. We expect Mr. and Mrs. West, and live in hopes of Dr. Young. He is now at Welwyn, sowing spiritual things in his parish. The sun will not shine on our microscope, which is a great vexation to the curious. Last night by the candle, I saw a fringe upon a leaf that would have done excellently well for your apron, and I dare say you would have made an admirable imitation of it. My brother Robert will soon be with you. I hope too to see him in town, for he will not be Duke and Dutchess enticed. Sunday se'nnight is the day fixed for our departure. Oh! then for operas and delight! Mr. Harley is come from London to-day, but has brought us no news; the town is full, but I do not hear of any gaieties going forward. Poor Mr. B—— takes his misfortunes so to heart, that I really pity him, but I have no balsam of heart's-ease for him. If he should die, I will have him buried in Westminster abbey, next to the woman who died with the prick of a

finger, for it is quite as extraordinary, and he shall have his figure languishing in wax, with "Miss Robinson fecit," written over his head. I really compassionate his sufferings, and pity him; but though I am as compassionate, I am as cold as charity: he pours out his soul in lamentations to his friends, and all

> But the nymph that should redress his wrong,
> Attend his passion, and reprove his song,

for the rhyme will have it so—ditty would have been better. I am glad he has such a stock of flesh to waste upon. Waller says that

> Sleep from careful lovers flies,
> To bathe himself in Saccharissa's eyes.

A less elegant poet might say, that flesh forsook my lover's ribs, to cover mine; I am really quite fat, and if there were not some hope that I might get lean again by raking in town, I should be uneasy at it. I am now the picture of Laugh and be fat, and begin to think myself a comely personage. Indeed, I wear well, and my

friends say I look better than ever. I have written to my brother Matt to-night, who is happy in the arms of Alma Mater, of whom he is a learned son. Mrs. Freind informs me the old doctor is in better health than for years past: one would think he had been boiled in Medea's kettle. Adieu; supper is on table.

ELIZ. ROBINSON.

To the Rev. Mr. Freind.

Bullstrode, Nov. 15.

SIR,

YOUR long expected, and at last despaired of letter, was sent to me here; I could hardly believe my eyes when they endeavoured to persuade me the direction was written by your hand; but the desire I had to find you was just, and that I was happy, made me give credit to their information. So far I have been civil enough; but now expect to taste

a little of the bitterness of my wrath. Pray why did not you tell me in your letter if Mrs. Freind was well, where she was, what she was doing, and what she was thinking (if there was any chance she might be thinking of me); are not these matters of importance in friendship? You sent me a scrap to tell me what I very well knew, that you ought to have wrote to me before, and you write it so short and lazily, that it convinced me of what I was ready to suspect, that you had rather not have done it then. Then, say you, your time is taken up by your duty; let me tell you friendship is a duty, the chief branches of which are constant remembrance, kind letters, petits soins, and minute attentions. To give friendship the name of a duty would frighten many people from it, but I know it would everlastingly recommend it to you. Indeed, I think if you employ all your time in making sermons, you should send copies of them to your friends. Are we to be neither merry nor wise! Really I thought your letters would have made

me both, when the dreams of Pindus and the Aonian maids delight no more.—You can change your subject to things good, wise, and holy. As for me, who dwell in the medium between judgment and fancy, and so happily have escaped both, have I not, with an honest dullness, inserted many a moral observation in a parenthesis, to the heavy lengthening of an important piece of scandal, or a sentence about the weather? I have been an extraordinary correspondent to you. I am sure I always answered your letters before you even desired it, and never concluded an epistle till you was heartily tired of it; so that in the whole course of our correspondence I never disappointed you. But you tell me I write so excellently well that you do not deserve my letters. The modesty is rare; I never knew but one instance of the like, which was of a person in the rheumatism, who being told pain was a trial of their virtue, and as a means of being approved good, desirable, the patient answered with an humility as great as your's, that not be-

ing equal to the occasion they were unworthy of it. All this was spoken on both sides with great gravity, and I could not help remarking it; and it is the fresher in my memory as it has been the only instance, excepting the present, that I recollect, of a person's declining what they thought a benefit. I left Mount Morris the 13th of last month, and came to this place to my dear and amiable friend, whom I found as indulgent, good, and partial to me as I left her; for her friendship to me taking its rise from her goodness, and not my merit, I look upon it as unalterable, which I should not have the presumption to do if it had any other foundation than her generosity. You know she met, this summer, with an affliction of a very melancholy kind, under which she has behaved in a manner that encreased my esteem for her, after I thought nothing could be added to it. Tenderness and piety towards the Person she lost, and resignation to that power who took him hence, appeared in her behaviour with a lustre hypocrisy

cannot imitate, but virtue must admire, How amiable is that state of mind in which there is nothing of insensibility or impatience, which is as willing to suffer as apt to feel, and which submits to Providence in every thing! Resignation and patience are virtues seldom to be found with the fortunate; they are lessons learnt in the rude school of adversity. The indulgencies of fortune are apt to strengthen the will, make it imperious, and the temper froward. Unhappy state of mortality, that prosperity is as full of danger as adversity is of sufferance? But the hazards of every fortune teach us this good lesson, that we, who can know nothing, should cheerfully submit to Him who knows all things. You will be glad to hear my counterpart in Kent is in good health; we resemble each other in nothing more than a sincere regard for you and Mrs. Freind. You were frequently the subject of our conversation, especially, as my Pea will tell you, when with one heart and one mind, we walked in a grove, where none but the sweet

bird of night mixed in the conversation. Friendship, retirement, happiness, and harmony, all contributed to put us in mind of you. Could no humble sister turtles in your dove-house put you in mind of us? I had not suffered your neglect in silence, if I had either eyes or health, but I have been half blind, and half sick, most of the summer. Here Pea had an opportunity of shewing her tenderness, and indeed she did it in such a manner that without any stoical firmness, I could almost have maintained the principle that pain was no evil; indeed, I fear to be better acquainted with her, for after almost twenty years society I find her every day more and more to be loved and valued; and indeed I think our attachment to each other is too great. To punish the idolatry of the mind, I find ease is a sacrifice made to the engraven image in the heart. Friendship is very anxious, and the order of things mocks our anxiety; I have just had an instance of it; my brother Robinson took a resolution this summer of being inocu-

lated; great was my care while it was in prospect. Fear is a false medium, and magnifies the objects we see through it: it increased the danger perhaps a little, but still I was well pleased it should be done. In regard to me he would not be inoculated till I was safe at Bullstrode, the operation was then performed, but he continues in perfect health, and his physicians say he will not have the small-pox now. At this I am much disappointed, as he will again be liable to the danger of having it in the natural way, to which my reason is something averse, my prejudices much. I had answered your letter as soon as I received it, if my thoughts had not been entirely taken up about my brother; now I am more composed. It has happened, it seems, but ill, but to whom does it seem so? to the blind to fate, and truth. In what we call accidents of fortune, as well as the order of things, *whatever is, is right.* You see I write to you as if I thought you had still the regard for my happiness, and for all related to me, that you used to

profess in the days of our correspondence; for it would not be pardonable in me to say so much of myself, my sister, and my brother, if I did not suppose them to be persons for whom you had some affection. However, let it be as it will, you cannot wonder at me. All people love themselves, and many love their brothers and sisters; I am sure you, whom I take to be a connoisseur in friendship, will allow it is the most natural of any; the deepest impressions are made in youth, when the heart is not hardened by time and accidents, the affections not blunted by disappointment, nor the mind distracted by business; then we are tender and disinterested. Vanity fills not the space of our affections with the equipage of the world, nor does ambition employ our thoughts on its more serious trifles; our passions are calm and our lives serene. Then, before hypocrisy or pride, avarice, or ambition take us, is the time for friendship,

When souls each other draw,
And love is liberty, and nature law.

What you say is very true of the ungenerousness of flattering people, and then ridiculing them; but flattery is ever preparing ridicule. Absurdity is the child of error, but chiefly of the mistaking ourselves; and nothing, you know, does so mislead us as flattery: and as to obliging the world by civility, it is in vain to endeavour it; as Solomon says, we must do well to ourselves, and the world will speak well of us. Popularity is the vainest of all the things that are done under the sun: I mean if proposed as the end of our actions. As for that praise which accompanies actions done for good and great purposes, it is musick to an honest ear, and the delight of the benevolent; but I had rather be bound to whistle to the hydra than make it my business to be always speaking and doing things of courtesy to the grande monde. Have you seen Mr. Lyttelton's verses upon St. Agnes's shrine? If you have not, I will send them to you; I think they are extremely pretty, and quite poetical, and full of fancy. I wish you could see the

table I am writing at, it is adorned with four of the Dutchess of Portland's children; they are as beautiful, and what is not always the happiness of the beautiful, as innocent as angels. They are building card-houses, and I think at the grand Tower of Babel there was not a greater confusion of tongues. Even in this amusement I see the different bent of their tempers; one is careful of the foundation of the house, another is ambitious to have it high, though the fabric totters with its eminence; another is impatient to have it finished, and the fourth wants me to put something in it that it cannot hold. How harmless is this exercise of their little passions! yet here is something of ambition, covetousness, and impatience. Thanks to Providence, their fortune is so well laid, they do not build it upon king, queen, or knave. If I had the education of a child of large fortune, it should not, in its earliest infancy, play a trick with a court card. But, alas! it is too late that we taste the wormwood in those things. I will now release you,

it is high time, surely, especially as none but the parish of Witney are to hear the words of the preacher. I desire my best compliments to Mrs. Freind, and good wishes to my little cousin, and I hope the Doctor and his lady are well. Before I take my leave, I will tell you I am in good charity and peace with you, but you have taught me (as fortune does with her favours where she takes a fancy) to believe I deserve something; you did well to withdraw the support of that whim; but vanity has still a refuge; if I cannot please myself with thinking you are my friend, I will still value myself upon being with the greatest sincerity and regard,

your's,

E. Robinson.

To the Same.

Bullstrode, the 20th Nov.

SIR,

I HOPE this will find you happily placed by your fire-side at Bath, with my amiable cousin on your right hand, the Doctor, and Mrs. Freind, on your left, and the charming little boy chattering upon your knee. If it were not for considering you in this agreeable situation I should much repine at your absence; but when I reflect on the happiness of my friends I can forget my particular interests. However, not to carry compliment beyond truth, though we now lament your absence, it will be fully made up to us when the professor of rhetoric * returns. Then we shall be comforted, pleased, improved, and delighted, and your worship *shall* be forgot. In the middle of dinner he shall often cry, *let us eat*, lest we should forget why we set round the table with plates before us,

* Dr. Grey.

and imagine we are at cribbage. When this professor comes, jest and black pudding shall stand afar off, mixt conversation shall arise from Hudibras and the proverbs, ballads, and the psalms of David: compliments shall abound, not of every one to their neighbours, but they shall seriously and sincerely apply the utmost powers and force of panegyrick to themselves. What a magnanimity there is in praising oneself, when not one of one's hearers enters into the merit of the subject. Is it right for a good protestant to leave infallibility uncontested to the Pope of Rome? It is impossible to live in such a state of indifference as not to love and admire some body, and who should it be but one's dear inseparable self? After all, how transporting are the pleasures of vanity! It is the mirror that reflects one's image back with more than original charms. Narcissus, indeed, fell in love with his person reflected by a silver stream, but then it seems the youth was handsome; but vanity is a complaisant representative, that asks no native beauty

in the object, but can render deformity itself agreeable to the self-beholder. Vanity acts the part of every kind of speculum; it lessens the defects, magnifies the beauty, and multiplies the merits. If the severe brow of wisdom repels thy airy phantoms, how welcome art thou still to the empty head and vacant heart, thou divine artificer of human happiness! Vanity is a moral mason, that of dirt and straw can build a palace wall; and from the worst materials raise the most superb architecture. Who would rob frail human nature of this great support? You, good Sir, and a few more whom reason guides in the ways of wisdom, may walk through the world without it; but in the pilgrimage of errors what is so good a guide? I see you are introducing it to me, when you would make me imagine you was received here on my recommendation. Far be it from me to reject so necessary a companion, and I will always have the candour, as well as gratitude, to recommend vanity to others, when it is that alone which recommends

me to myself. I have obeyed your commands by burning your letter, as you have promised another phœnix shall arise from its flames.

I am, dear Sir,
your obedient humble servant,
E. Robinson.

To the Same.

Bullstrode, ——

Sir,

Though a word would have served for your justification, a postscript was not sufficient for my happiness; so you did very well to write me a whole letter. How glad I am to hear from Mrs. Freind and you, I cannot express; and if I could, I would not. Even the appearance of compliment and flattery ought to be avoided; for while those who feel little friendship express much, those who feel much must express less than they would,

and really fall short of truth for fear they should seemingly exceed it. While every vice is hid by hypocrisy, every virtue is suspected to be hypocrisy. This excuses the bad from imitating virtue, the ungenerous from rewarding it, and the suspicious from trusting it. Because credulity is a folly, suspicion is looked upon as wisdom, as if it was not as necessary a part of wisdom to know what to believe, as what to reject. Doubt should lead to enquiry, and enquiry to knowledge; but our modern sceptics think fit to remain in uncertainty, rather proud to believe less, than to know more than other people. I have given hints in my letters to Pen, that I thought curiosity might sometimes be blameable, and now I find her letters are not read. But mine she is to read aloud, as far as she thinks fit. We write every post long letters; it is the greatest comfort to absent friends to write much, but how much more agreeable it would be, if we could think to each others eyes, as we do, when present to each others ears? She indeed can write without any exami-

nation, but to ask questions of the dumb is an odd piece of work. I have been very sorry, and, what is less becoming, very angry that I could not answer your letter sooner, but many impediments have I met with; my own silence was punishment, do not revenge it with yours.

You are very partial in your opinion of me, and I am obliged to you for your wishes; what is so far above one's desert should be above one's desires. Alas! the time is over, that the price of a virtuous woman is above rubies, and as for me, I have nothing but myself in the scale, and some few vanities that make me light. When few of our sex are grateful, will many of your's be generous? It is playing at hazard with a benefit to bestow it, where you are not sure it will meet with a return. It is a sad sign of depravity of manners that generosity is blamed, and gratitude wondered at, yet so it is in the commerce of the world. I hope I shall some time or another see you in your peaceful retirement at Witney. I fancy the Muses haunt it; there is a poetical

turn in all your letters; somewhere or another the nine ladies write a few lines. I am not enough acquainted with the inspired train to distinguish which of them puts the finishing touch. I am reading Sir Philip Sidney, but am ashamed to own I do not relish him; not even the exceeding eloquence with which he describes the exceedingness of Philocleas' beauty, the exceedingness of which exceeded all other beauty; for as much as the mind's excellence did, as it were, shine through the excellent beauty of her person, insomuch that no one could determine whether that the eye in beholding, or the ear in hearing, did more receive the sound, or objects of delight; but together they wrought in the mind's eye a goodly admiration: so beautiful was her voice, and so harmonious her person, as did strangely divide the affections; which after long doubting what to admire, at last consented to admire, without knowing what was admired, where every thing was admirable. Thus does Sir Philip, with expression of craftiness, or

rather craftiness of expression, so entirely puzzle my brain, and so overcome me with battles (for, like Bayes, he prefers that one quality of fighting to all others in a hero), that I cannot keep my attention for half an hour. I am surprised to see that a conjunction of wit and imagination have not been able to beget poetry: but in rhyme he hardly exceeds the bellman. With a similitude of quality, they work a contrary effect, for Sir Philip makes those sleep who wake, and the bellman makes those wake who sleep. I don't know whether I prefer prose or heavy morality in rhyme, but they are all bout-rimés, things rhymed not versified. My compliments to Mrs. Friend. Supper has been upon table this half hour.

I am, &c.

ELIZ. ROBINSON.

To Mrs. Donnellan.

Bullstrode, January 1, 1742.

Dear Mrs. Donnellan,

Though there is no day of the year in which one does not wish all happiness to one's friends, this is the day in which the heart goes forth in particular vows and wishes for the welfare of those it loves. It is the birth of a new year, whose entrance we would salute, and hope auspicious: nor is this particular mark of time of little use; it teaches us to number our days, which a wise man thought an incitement to the well spending them; and indeed, did we consider how much the pleasure and profit of our lives depends upon an economy of our time, we should not waste it as we do, in idle repentance or reflection on the past, or a vain unuseful regard for the future. In our youth we defer being prudent till we are old, and look forward to a promise of wisdom as the portion of latter years:

when we are old we seek not to improve, and scarce employ ourselves; looking backward to our youth, as to the day of our diligence, and take a pride in laziness, saying we rest as after the accomplishment of our understandings; but we ought to ask for our daily merit as for our daily bread. The mind no more than the body can be sustained by the food taken yesterday, or promised for to-morrow. Every day ought to be considered as a period apart: some virtue should be exercised, some knowledge improved, and the value of happiness well understood; some pleasure comprehended in it; some duty to ourselves or others must be infringed if any of these things are neglected. Many look upon the present day as only the day before to-morrow, and wear it out with a weary impatience of its length. I pity these people who are ever in pursuit, but never in possession; and I think their happiness must arrive as we date our promises to children, when two to-morrows come together. We are taught that there is a

prudence in neglecting the present time for the future, when, alas! our fate deceives us, and we labour for others: for, as says our poet,

> He that to future times extends his cares,
> Deals in other men's affairs.

We ought so to enjoy the present as not to hurt the future. I would wish myself as little anxious as possible about the future, for the event of things generally mocks our foresight, and eludes our care, and shows us that vain is the labour of anxiety. The man was laughed at as a blunderer, who said in a public business, "we do much for posterity, I would fain see them do something for us." I have no notion of doing every thing for the future, while it does nothing for us. Shall I give fate to-day without knowing whether it will pay me with to-morrow? The adventurers for hope are bankrupts of content: may the sun every day this year, when it rises, find you well with yourself, and at its setting leave you happy with your friends! Let it be rather

the felicity of ease and pleasure than the extasy of mirth and joy! May your mind repose in virtue and truth, and never in indolence or negligence! That you already know much, is the best incitement to know more; if you study trifles you neglect two of the best things in the world, knowledge and your own understanding. I wish we were as much afraid of unbending the mind as we are of relaxing our nerves; I should as soon be afraid of stretching a glove till it was too strait, as of making the understanding and capacity narrow by extending it to things of a large comprehension; yet this is a common notion. I beg of you to reserve Monday morning for me, and I will spend it all with you; on Tuesday I set out for Mount Morris, and on Sunday night Pen desires you to be at her house. I hope to return to you in the beginning of March, for between two and three months; I wish we may contrive to be much together then, and will do my part towards it; I am the easier in this parting, as the meeting again is so

near at hand. Our happy society is just breaking up, but I will think of it with gratitude, and not with regret, and thank fate for the joyful hours she lent me, without blaming her for putting a stop to them. Her's is the distaff that spins the golden thread as well as the scissars that cut it. This year does not promise me such pleasure as the last has afforded me here, but the fairest gifts of fate come often unexpected. I hope this year will be happy to me, the last was much encumbered with fears and anxiety, and I had not much health in it, yet I was concerned at taking leave of it yesterday; I had not for it the tenderness one feels for a friend, or the gratitude one has to a benefactor; but I was reconciled to it as to an old acquaintance: it had not enriched nor (I fear) improved me, but it suffered me; and admitted my friends; I am sorry too when I am made to compute that I am tending towards a season of less gaiety, for there are few things worth being serious about. Follies that are our diversion when we

are young, are apt to be our trouble when we grow more prudent; a fool too, which now we laugh at, we shall then detest, and those vices we meet abroad, that now in a pride of virtue we despise, we shall from observation of their ill effects sadly fear and hate; our disposition will be changed from seeing to feeling vice and folly, from being spectators we shall become sufferers. You ask me how the desire of talking is to be cured? I don't know the recipe, and you don't want it. The Dutchess thanks you for your letter, and will answer it by word of mouth. I am sorry you have been low spirited, but I can never like you the less for it. Mutual friendships are built on mutual wants; were you perfectly happy you would not want me; but there is no being but the one perfect who is alone and without companion and equal. Imperfection wants and seeks assistance.

I am, dear Madam, &c.

E. Robinson.

To Miss S. Robinson.

Bullstrode, 1741-2.

My dear Sister,

This day did not begin with the auspicious appearance of a letter from you. I am glad it is not the first day of the year, for I might have been superstitious upon it. I wish it may be our lot to find in the next year what we wanted in the last. But, alas! time steals the most precious pleasures from us; our life is like a road where every shew that has passed, leaves but a track that makes remembrance and reflection rugged. Where gay pleasures have swiftly passed, unsightly marks remain, and observation is much longer displeased than ever it was delighted. I am loth to part with an old year as with an old acquaintance; not that I have to it the gratitude one feels to a benefactor, or the affection one bears to a friend. I have one particular obligation

to this year, as it has insured you from the danger of the small-pox, which, with a violent hand, takes at once what time steals more gently. This year, too, has allowed us many happy months together; I hope the rest will do the same, else they will come unwelcome, and depart unregretted. I pity Miss Anstey for the loss of her agreeable cousin and incomparable lover. For my part, I would rather have a merry sinner for a lover than so serious a saint. I wish he had left her a good legacy. I must tell you the Dutchess drinks your health in particular every other day; Lady Oxford dines with her one day, and I the other. You will be acquainted with her Grace next winter, and Mrs. Pendarvis, and the rest of her friends, whose company you will like very well. Mrs. Donnellan tells me she has a closet in Mr. Percival's new house, which is to hold none but friends, and friends' friends. I fancy you will not dislike the society. Adieu, my dearest sister; if I could dream of you it would induce m o keep my bed for a week

together, so I think it is better that I do not.

I am, &c. &c.

E. Robinson.

P. S. This day se'nnight I shall be with you, and the good family at Horton, telling a winter's tale by the fire side. Oh! that we were all to meet there that once graced that fire-side, even the goodly nine, thanking my father and mother for all the life they imparted to us, and have since supported! I hope the flock is safe, and our meeting reserved for some of the golden days of fate. I wish you all a happy new year, that shall bring you much pleasure, and leave no repentance behind. May it increase your knowledge, without giving ye sighs of experience!

To the Dutchess of Portland.

Sittingbourne, Tuesday.

MADAM,

I HAVE left much of myself at Whitehall; I think I have some right to bring a few of your thoughts to Sittingbourne. I wish your Grace may not be as much tired with your journey as I am. I dare say Mr. Achard will tell you that by the size of my paper he imagines I have sent you a map of my travels; but I shall not enrich my description with the windings of the Thames and Medway, or the situation of Rochester. I shall be the heroine of my own story. I have generally observed that the writers of memoirs remember nothing but themselves; thus, being very important to myself, and insignificant to the rest of the world, I will proceed to write my own history, and talk of myself rather than not be spoken of. This morning I passed by Whitehall to ferry over the Thames. Think, if you can, who have never found any one so

worthy of regret, as the person I left, what I felt when I turned my back upon that place. I said, turning to my sister, "That is the gate." Then, when I passed by the door of Privy Garden, I pointed to it. These might seem trifles to standers by, but love gives a mighty dignity to small circumstances. I thought my tracing your footsteps, to be a little like Strephon and Claius, in Sir Philip Sidney, where they follow their shepherdess in their sorrowful remembrance till they come to the last adieu, and here love and grief grow very eloquent. I think it is one of the prettiest passages in the Arcadia. I will now say no more upon this subject, but lead your Grace to a more diverting part of my history. When I arrived at Northfleet (where we dined) every Phillis and Corydon were at a fair in the town, and to enter into the humours of the place, I walked through it. In one booth were nymphs and swains buying garters, with amorous posies; some only with the humble request, "when these you see, remember me;"

others with a poetical, and more familiar, "be true to me, as I'm to thee." Under another booth, for the pleasure of bold British youths, was Admiral Vernon, in gingerbread; indeed he appeared in many shapes there; and the curate of the parish carried him home in a brass tobacco stopper. I was a little concerned to see him lying in passive gingerbread upon a stall with Spanish nuts; but the politicians of our age are wonderful in reconciling the interests of nations. I assure you there was a great deal of company; many hearts did I see exchanged for fairings of cherry-coloured ribaud; and one Cymon, more polished than the rest, presented his damsel with a fan, with an intent, I presume, not to give "coolness to the matchless dame." I left the beau monde at the fair, and walked into the churchyard to read epitaphs (for which I would cite an example of right honourable authority); there was absurdity and sadness, jest and death, hand in hand. Some thought to lengthen out remembrance just a few years, by a frail monu-

ment of wood; others, more able to purchase, though not more worthy of longer remembrance, have wrote their register when they were born and when they died, in marble. Many of the epitaphs were in verse: but one monument raised my curiosity. It was a little triumphal arch of wood; I suppose some mighty hero, at least a corporal, lies under it. I could not help crying out, Oh grave! where is thy victory? There was no writing to inform why this triumph over the invincible conqueror, Death, was erected, so I leave it to the conjecture of the ingenious. If the deceased had left such memoirs of their journey to their inn as I have done, who would have read their chronicle? Some friend as partial as your Grace is to me. I presumed much upon that partiality when I sat down at nine o'clock, after a journey of above forty miles, to write to you. I have but just supped, and am very sleepy, having this morning waked the sun; a very uncivil thing, you will say, when he is so good as to let me sleep generally many

hours after he is up. I beg my compliments to the Duke, particularly to his elbow, which, I hope, is well by this time.

I am,
my dear Lady Dutchess's
very grateful and affectionate
FIDGET.

To the Same.

Mount Morris, Friday, Jan. 1741-2.

MY DEAR LADY DUTCHESS,

I HAD the pleasure of your letter yesterday. I was much rejoiced to hear your Grace had not found your cold so bad as it seemed to threaten; but, at the same time, I was concerned to think I had given you low spirits; for chearfulness is the best gift of health, and the happiest disposition of mind. Your delightful expressions of affection made me

extremely happy, and your arguments for my content are excellent. It will be my disgrace, as well as my unhappiness, if I do not profit by them; indeed I think I can promise for myself that I will. I have not suffered at all from my journey, but got here without cold, well, and happy to find my friends so. My sister is extremely thin, which I am not pleased with: however, as she is well at present, it would be a reproach to me not to be happy too for the present: and for more we cannot answer, and would in vain enquire. To be anxious for the future is the malady of human nature,

Facheux entendement, qui nous fait toujours craindre,
Malheureux sentiment, qui nous fait toujours plaindre.

The coldness of the weather will confine even the volatile spirit of your Grace to the fire-side. I am sure I would not go out in any vehicle but the chariot of the sun, nor make a visit to any creature but a salamander. If you go out I hope you will wrap up very warm. After the regular life you led at Bullstrode, and the select

company you had there, sure the court on twelfth night must appear a strange confusion and mixture. Many creatures that, as Dr. Donne says, Adam had been posed to name, such as seem scarcely made by the hand of nature, nor yet fashioned by art. In these crowds I have seen shapes that Prometheus would not have lighted at the expense of an ordinary brimstone match, yet they were animated with the spark divine. I have beheld beaux that seemed to be made for nothing but the tailor, or that companion of the tailor, which Mr. Achard magnifies from contempt to terror in his microscope; but the figures of human kind do not differ like their minds. One never sees a face with but one feature, though one finds sometimes an understanding with only one faculty. We seldom find a well proportioned mind. If there is a perfect symmetry of parts to be found in a mind, it is in faces, where there are but small features, delicate and not strong. Where nature acts with strength, a prevalence falls somewhere; where she is elegant about her work, she

may finish highly; but to connoisseurs the rough sketch of a master is more pleasing than the laboured performance of a more ordinary genius; and even the outlines, and rude draught of a noble capacity give pleasure. My letter is sent for, else I should crave pardon of your leisure and patience, and go on a little longer. Your Grace, as a true friend, will, like a true knight, be concerned for one of the same profession, and, I am sure, will wish to hear what is become of my brother's friend, about whom I told you he was much afflicted. We have heard nothing of him yet, so we imagine it goes ill: are not these things warnings to inoculate? I desire your Grace to make my compliments to my Lord Duke. I hope I may wish Lord George joy of being a senator, and having a title to wear a wig of the first dignity. I am Mr. Achard's humble servant; and the little ones, and your Grace's

affectionate, faithful,

E. Robinson.

To the Same.

Mount Morris, Jan. 15th, 1741-2.

MADAM,

IN your reasons for writing to me there was both judgment and mercy. For all the good things you do, no heart does better thank you than mine, and, let me tell your Grace, there is nothing belongs to me so good as my heart. As for being the guest of my head, and the chief image of my fancy, 'tis true you are so, but the place and the company there are unworthy of you; enthroned in my brain sits many a prejudice triumphant, much space entirely void, a desolate waste: some corners stuffed with lumber, and littered with unsorted matter; things by haste mishapen, by idle memory deformed, by ignorance darkened, or by error and folly strangely disguised; reason deposed by will, judgment manacled in the bonds of prejudice, reflection busied about trifles, fancy running wild, observation looking through false colours,

and confounding and mistaking objects, discretion sitting idle, because reason's comparative rule and balance are taken from her, and whim is doing all the business, while chance is sending her on a fool's errand. But my heart, I can boast, is fitter for your reception; it is filled with fair affections, love and gratitude wait on you, esteem holds you fast, regard will never part with you, tenderness watches you, fidelity, and every honest power, is ready to serve you, the passions are all under the gentle sway of friendship. Many guests my heart has not admitted, such as are there do it honour, and a long and intimate acquaintance has preceded their admittance: they were invited in by its best virtues, they passed through the examination of severity, nay even answered some questions of suspicion that enquired of their constancy, and sincerity, but now they are delivered over to the keeping of constant faith and love; for doubt never visits the friend entered, but only examines such as would come in, least the

way should be too common. There are many ways into my heart and but one out, which is to be forced but by outrageous injury, or breach of trust reposed. I am obliged to your Grace for your wishes of fair weather; sunshine gilds every object, but alas! January is but cloudy weather. How few seasons boast many days of calm! April, which is the blooming youth of the year, is as famous for hasty showers as for gentle sunshine; May, June, and July, have too much heat and violence; the autumn withers the summer's gaiety, and in the winter the hopeful blossoms of spring, and fair fruits of summer are decayed, and storms, and clouds arise; nature is out of humour at her loss, bewails her youth and strength worn out, and fairest seasons past; thus is it, too, with us. In our youth gentle expectation, and kind hope, like soft zephyrs fan our minds, but fear often waters our tender wishes with sad tears: in the maturer seasons of life passions grow strong and violent, though more constant; in the decline appears

melancholy decay; softness and strength gone off, while dismal age brings despair of amendment, and makes the pleasure of youth and profit of the riper age forgotten; unpleasant, unprofitable, uncomfortable, dark and dreary in itself, an enemy to every thing in nature, churlish and unkind, it casts no benevolent beams, but blows rude and biting blasts. Happy and worthy are those few whose youth is not impetuous nor their age sullen; they indeed should be esteemed, and their happy influence courted. I am glad to see Lord George's frank upon the letter, a person must have a good deal of power to make any thing pass but by the road of gain in our world; I am much obliged to his lordship for exhorting your Grace to write to me, and desire my thanks on that head, with congratulations on his new dignity; may he grow in grace and wig daily, and an honourable and reverend cravat shall not be wanting. I have been very well since I came here; my face has acquired no new faults; it has seen too many days to expect to be

mended by them, and were beauty immortal, frail vanity would not be so; and the first, without the latter, would not delight. I am glad however my face is not swelled with the frost, for I am so uneasy under objects of terror, that I would by no means be frightful, out of compassion to my friends: my countenance has never wounded any man, and heaven forbid it should make a lady miscarry! My sister and I are going out for air and exercise; how poor mortals labour to be healthy and happy! but health and happiness are fugitive things. I shall send my brother word he may have the books when Mr. Carter's executors want them. Poor Morris is in deep affliction, and indeed his friend deserved his utmost concern: he was with him in his last agonies; a grief his tender nature could hardly support. I believe though Mr. Carter was not of a gay disposition, he was happy. If sense and virtue could make a person happy he was so, and if it cannot, what is this world? Virtue is all that is within our power, other circum-

stances of felicity are given alike to all; sure, therefore, equitable Heaven knows that virtue alone outweighs them all:

> If there's a power above us, as that there is
> All nature cries aloud, he must delight in goodness,
> And that which he delights in must be happy.

My brother is very unfortunate to have the first years of his life thus darkened by misfortune; he has health and a cheerful nature to carry him through, but my heart bleeds for him. I am provoked and grieved in spirit, to hear some people wonder at his taking the trouble to go up to town to take care of a person who was not related to him, and they express great surprise at his being afflicted: I assure you it is the sentiment of the great city of Canterbury, though many there would have gone twice as far to have saved a vole at quadrille. My brother Robinson was in town but a few hours, and meeting with the ill news of a friend's death, and finding his brother in affliction, I imagine he was scarce able to wait upon your Grace, nor do I

suppose he had any dress unpacked that was proper to make his appearance in at Whitehall. I am glad you go into public places so as to keep yourself diverted: dissipation is the best thing for the health and spirits; and I am at present too ready to judge this world does not deserve our collected thoughts; there is so much misery and disappointment, it is not well to reflect and examine too deeply. The scenes of the world are gay, and the show delights our imagination, but the drama will hardly bear the criticisms of reason; fools and knaves are the principal actors, and many a villainous plot, and sad catastrophe one beholds upon the stage of life; it is best to look on with an equal mind,

Hurt, can we laugh; and honest, need we cry?

It is wisest to neglect all follies, and forgive all vices but our own. I hear Dr. Clarke is going to be made a Bishop, and I hope the news is true, for, with reverence be it spoken, I am of opinion even the venerable bench wants a supply of

charity and wit, and in both he abounds; may his spirit animate the clay (and dough) of some of his mitred brethren, with whose mitres are entwined the nodding poppy rather than the laurels that adorn the learned head. I have wrote your Grace an unreasonably long letter, but I cannot release you till I have desired my compliments to my Lord Duke and Mr. Achard; a thousand kisses to the little angels; twenty of which are to the Marquis's chin, and twenty more to the silver curls in Lady Margaret's neck. To Mrs. Donnellan, Mrs. Pendarvis, Dash, and Mrs. Dewes, my kind remembrance; to all that remember me my friendly recollection; to such as forget me my hearty forgiveness and entire oblivion; so being in affection with my friends, and charity with my enemies, and easy indifference about the bulk of the world, I will look after my future provision. I am now going to read Dr. Gastrel's book. If Mrs. Pen does not send me the world she promised me, I will weep in the style of Alexander the

Great, not indeed, as that madman did, for a world to quarrel with, but for one to agree with. I want the kingdom of the just, such a long and pacific reign would suit me mightily, but this rapid world I like not much. Time, and the wheel of Fortune, run too fast for my speed; but in a thousand years I should have leisure for every thing. My brother Tom is reading to me, my sister is pulling me by the sleeve, all are favouring my meditations. I like your account of Lord S——; your Grace has as complaisant a way of calling a person dull as ever I knew; I dare say his lordship did not stare at you. All your obliged humble servants here beg their compliments, my sister in particular.

I am, Madam,
your Grace's most obedient, most
obliged, and ever grateful,
ELIZ. ROBINSON.

P. S. The direction Mrs. Pendarvis is to have for the book, is—to be left for me at Mrs. Pembroke's, grocer, without St.

George's gate, Canterbury. I have been blooded according to Dr. Mead's order; I am sure he takes me for a termagant, and is desirous of bringing my spirit under, but great souls are invincible, and you see by my affections and aversions he has not reduced me to apathy; if he should, he would be a loser by it, for I have him in high regard and esteem.

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*To the Rev. Dr. Shaw, F.R.S. &c. &c.**

Rev. Sir,

You will perhaps think me rather too hasty in my congratulations if I wish you joy of being going to be married, whereas it is generally usual to stay till people really are so, before we offer to make our compliments. But joy is a very transi-

* This anonymous letter was written by Miss Robinson, and sent to Dr. Shaw, the traveller, at the instigation, and for the amusement, of the Dutchess of Portland and her society.

tory thing; therefore I am willing to seize on the first occasion; and as I imagine you are glad you are going to be married, I wish you joy of that gladness; for whether you will be glad after you are married, is more than mortal wight can determine; and having prepared myself to rejoice with you, I should be loth to defer writing till, perhaps, you were become sorrowful; I must therefore in prudence prevent your espousals. I would not have you imagine I shall treat matrimony in a ludicrous manner; it is impossible for a man who, alas! has had two wives, to look upon it as a jest, or think it a light thing; indeed it has several advantages over a single life. You that have made many voyages, know that a tempest is better than a dead calm; and matrimony teaches many excellent lessons, particularly patience and submission, and brings with it all the advantages of reproof, and the great profit of remonstrances. These indeed are only temporal benefits; but besides, any wife will save you from purgatory, and a diligent one

will secure heaven to you. If you would atone for your sins, and do a work meet for repentance, *marry*. Some people wonder how Cupid has been able to wound a person of your prowess; you, who wept not with the crocodile, listened not to the Sirens, stared the basilisk in the face, whistled to the rattlesnake, went to the masquerade with Proteus, danced the hays with Scylla and Charybdis, taught the dog of the Nile to fetch and carry, walked cheek by jowl with a lion, made an intimacy with a tiger, wrestled with a bear, and, in short, have lived like an owl in the desert or a pelican in the wilderness; after defying monsters so furious and fell, that you should be overcome by an arrow out of a little urchin's quiver, is amazing! Have you not beheld the mummies of the beauteous Cleopatra, and of the fair consorts of the Ptolemies, without one amorous sigh! And now to fall a victim to a mere modern human widow, is most unworthy of you! What qualities has a woman that you have not vanquished! Her tears are not more apt to betray than

those of the crocodile she is hardly as deceitful as the Siren, less deadly, I believe, than the basilisk or rattlesnake, scarce as changeable as Proteus, nor more dangerous than Scylla and Charybdis, as docile and faithful as the dog of the Nile, sociable as the lion, and mild, sure, as the tiger! As her qualities are not more deadly than those of the animals you have despised, what is it that has conquered you? Can it be her beauty? Is she as handsome as the empress of the woods? as well accommodated as the many-chambered sailor? or as skilful as the nautilus? You will find many a creature by earth, air, and water, that is more beautiful than a woman; but indeed she is composed of all elements, and

> Fire, water, woman, are man's ruin,
> And great's thy danger, Thomas Bruin.

But you will tell me she has all the beauties in nature united in her person, as ivory in her forehead, diamonds in her eyes, &c.

But where's the sense, direct or moral,
That teeth are pearl, and lips are coral?

If she is a dowdy, what can you do with her? If she is a beauty, what will she do for you? A man of your profession might know the lilies of the field toil not, neither do they spin; if she is rich she won't buy you, if she is poor I don't see why she should borrow you. But, I fear, I am advising in vain, while your heart, like a fritter, is frying in fat in Cupid's flames. How frail and weak is flesh! else sure, so much might have kept in one little heart; had Cupid struck the lean, or the melancholy, I had not lamented; but true Jack Falstaff, kind Jack Falstaff, merry Jack Falstaff, *fat Jack* Falstaff, beware the foul fiend, they call it marriage, beware on't! As what I have advanced on the subject of matrimony is absolutely unanswerable, I need not tell you where to direct a letter for me, nor will I, in my pride, declare who I am that give you this excellent counsel; but, that you may not despair of knowing where to address your thanks for

such an extraordinary favour, I will promise, that before you find a courtier without deceit, a patriot without spleen, a lawyer without quibble, a philosopher without pride, a wit without vanity, a fool without presumption, or any man without conceit, you shall find the true name of

your well wisher,
and faithful counsellor,

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*To the Dutchess of Portland.**

MADAM,

IF your Grace designed to employ me so that I should not trouble you with my letters, you did well to set me to take care of a future state, and to look after

* This letter is too prolix, and is inserted rather as a contrast to the lively girlish letters, than as exhibiting her deliberate sentiments. She makes trial of her wings for future more steady flights.

another world, for here I have so little to do in my present position, I should have abundant leisure to be impertinent. I have been endeavouring to confine my wishes to the little circle of my fire-side, and my care and employments are not further extended; I have a few books on my left hand and a pen and ink on my right, and a work bag, which I seldom molest, before me; leisure I have abused to idleness, and ease to downright laziness; I avoid business, seek not wisdom, but cherish mirth: as for time, I troubled myself only about that small part of it my clock gave me an account of; other worlds my capacity had straitened as much as a gentleman of our acquaintance, who would have put a constellation, like the dust of a sun-flower, into your microscope; and for my divine spirit, I thought, like the innocent girl in the Tempest, it was only blue smoke that appeared at my mouth in a cold morning to tell me the day was frosty; but your Grace, whose words enlarge every mind into which they enter, has set me on a

more noble employment. According to your commands I read the Moral Proof of the Certainty of a future State.* I like the book very well, but, my dear Lady Dutchess, the terms on which you lent it to me were hard, viz. that I should give my opinion of it; now I have scarce knowledge enough to have any opinion at all, little ground to trust to it, and as little courage to mention it; the writer was a wise man and a Bishop, one that knew more of this world, was drawn nearer to another, had improved his mind and examined it; I, a simple reader, a young and ignorant damsel, God wot, in whom to examine, is impertinence, to judge, arrogance; but I think you are well enough acquainted with the powers of the mind to know we cannot suspend judging nor implicitly believe. Had Providence subjected us to either of those things, we should either never have done any thing, or have been as liable to be led by bad example and precept as by good, for it is the business of discretion

* By Dr. Gastrell, Bishop of Chester.

and judgment to inform us of the difference; therefore, opinion is the right of the most simple and weak, and only as the general right of a rational being do I assert it.

I cannot say I think his arguments to make out his first proposition are so good as many I have heard for a future state; the first proposition, I suppose you remember, is, that the true end of man, and the only reason of human life assignable, is to serve God here, in order to be happy in his favour hereafter; the truth of this, he says, is to be shewn by a positive direct proof taken from the nature of man and the circumstances of his condition in this world; our Bishop says (upon what intimate knowledge of the great Creator's will I know not) that but for another life there is no reason at all for man's existing; this is a manner of speaking which I own hurts me: it seems an arrogant and ungrateful acceptation of that being which infinite wisdom, bounty, and mercy, has imparted to us. Is the contrivance and disposition of such a

Creator, whose fulness of perfection moves him to act, and who is necessarily wise and merciful, to be called in question in any thing? Sells he his bounty like niggard man, who never pays till after the labour and pains of his slave have earned them? But alas! we, who are the favourite creatures of high Providence, like the minions of an earthly prince, grow proud and insolent by favour. Because the infinite goodness has promised us a world of unmixed and uninterrupted felicity, we spurn at this, and groan under every oppression; the hope of a future state was designed to be our happiness even here, but we make it the cause of our impatience. It has been answerable to the nature of God to make many worlds, and give life to many creatures; we see the gradation rising into man by the eyes of sense; the eyes of faith and reason see it rising from us to infinite. Mr. Pope says, "in the order of Providence there must be somewhere such a being as man;" and indeed is it not judging more adequately of God,

who is ever wise and good, and as an inspired writer says, whose tender mercies are over all his works, to think man rightly placed in regard to this world, though his chief end be for another, than to suppose Providence is to be justified therein only at his entrance into another state? And also I think if we are here for nothing at all but for another life, the whole order in the world is vain, the animal creation vain, and much of the design and work of Providence is called in question. Our author says, that but for a future state not only many virtues would be overthrown, but many of our sins would be more extravagant than they now appear; I wish he had told us what sins were to be of service to us in another life. Our desire of living on, and still continuing our being, shows the double wisdom of Providence, which he does not comprehend, viz. our use in this world, as well as the place provided for us in another. It is the first law of nature and of God, that we do not abandon our post here till his gracious will has worked its

pleasure by our means. Then his other argument, that but for another life we should not endeavour to be wise or great, I think there is not much in it; for as to the use the knowledge we attain will be of hereafter, I doubt whether it is by many believed that they shall maintain that superiority over immortal spirits which they have gained by their learning over their fellow-creatures; and as to the pleasure in greatness, and the utmost grasp of mighty ambition, being to reflect thereupon in our immortal state, fewer still can be so vain as to think it any thing. Then, as to the desire of fame proceeding from a belief founded in the nature of immortality, it is weak enough. Shall the spirits of men made perfect delight in the fame of a conqueror or a poet, the first founded in wickedness and oppression, and the second in vanity and jest? Was the fame and greatness sought by an Alexander, a Cromwell, and coveted by a Caligula suggested by this? The desire of fame is implanted in us by that wisdom which

has provided all things for our advantage; it stimulates mankind to great actions, and the unbounded designs of pride, covetousness, and ambition, do not seem to me (as is his opinion) the efforts of a great immortal spirit so much as contrived for the general end of society. The satisfaction the miser denies himself is given with advantage to his heir, on whom as much prodigal expense and wanton luxury is lavished as on the other was exercised penuriôus penance; the labours of one generation make the ease of another. That man is in the general less happy than beasts I cannot imagine; consider in what a delightful point of view he is in regard to the rest of the creation; all the book of nature open to him, and he alone has a mind to understand it all; to him it is given to see the working hand of Providence, how it has fashioned all the curious workmanship of matter, and the excellence and perfection of every living creature, the fixed and incomparable laws of the universe, and from this to adore the first good, first

perfect, and first fair. But I see I must not go on at this rate, for I shall lengthen my letter to a shameful size, therefore, to leave particular objections, I will only say, I think this way of despising all that is best in this world, is ungrateful to him by whom we were placed in it for a time. Rather let us build us a tabernacle of content in this wilderness, and say it is good for us to be here while it is the pleasure of the Almighty. If we make it a maxim that there is nothing of happiness to be enjoyed in our present state, the greatest virtues mortality can reach will perish. What patriot would labour for his country, did he look upon it as a dungeon of misery? What sage would instruct his countrymen, if he thought folly preferable to wisdom? What parent would bring up their child, if they thought life a curse? The murderer would be the only benevolent man; none would arise to defend the laws, the lives, the liberties, the properties of their fellow-citizens; those people who least acknowledge the benefits of their state

seem to me least to endeavour to improve it by the satisfaction that arises from virtuous actions; despair teaches inaction, but hope is the spur of diligence; if we believe there is happiness in virtue, and that her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace, we shall endeavour to make a progress in this road which alone can bring us to the abiding of content. To speak only of moral proofs of a future state many there are that appear entirely convincing, and it seems a notion wrote by the very finger of God upon the minds of men, and I think they must be very unhappy who cannot rely upon it; there is something so terrible to nature in the thoughts of annihilation, and entire oblivion, that nothing but stupidity can endure it without anguish: the unequal distribution of the things of this world is the greatest proof that can be that there is another where the difference will be made up, where the wicked man shall not triumph over him that is more righteous; of this too we may be sure, that though we can-

not by searching find out the Almighty, to perfection, yet he must ever act towards us with infinite wisdom, goodness, justice, and mercy; and if increase of knowledge oftentimes gives us a new view of sorrow, faith opens to us everlasting scenes of felicity. There are many good things in this book, but the compass of a letter would not take them in; the mind assents to truth immediately; and I wish, in affairs of this nature, where the good and happiness of mankind are concerned, nothing was introduced because it wears the charm of novelty, or the disguise of plausibility. On this subject there are truths that would swell folios, therefore it is but a vanity to introduce any thing else. I think this world may afford to some a pleasant journey, to many it is indeed a sore travail; but those in happiness ought to be ready to commit themselves to the disposal of Providence for another world, the riches of whose grace they have tasted in this; such as are heavy laden with misery may rejoice to be freed from it, and to expect from

justice, and mercy eternal and never fail-ing, the reward it must certainly bestow on suffering virtue. But let us not, because God, in the fulness of his grace, and riches of his mercy, has promised us a better world, despise this, which too is his gift, from whom every good and perfect gift cometh. Impatience makes every accident a harm; all evils but the loss of friends and health may be borne; grief is not easy to be conquered and terrible to be endured; but separation is not so grievous to those who have the hopes of meeting their friends again in a glorious immortality, not parted long and then to part no more. No human wisdom can be such a support in misfortune as the reliance of faith; the rules of philosophy are rather a denial of human passions to be what they are, and must be, than any possible and practicable method of restraining them. Content, I fear, is oftener by accident than art; something of the disposition, chiefly assisted indeed by our endeavours. Our nature may be restrained, but never can be subdued,

neither by the power of strength, nor bias of custom; a person may be wise according to the wisdom of men, and yet be neither good nor happy. Would we enquire the way to felicity and perfection, and ask of the learned the way, the learned are blind. Oh man! why exaltest thou thyself? Then down with all but,

> The sacred volumes, down;
> Only reserve the sacred one:
> Low, reverently low,
> Make thy stubborn knowledge bow.

My dearest friend, excuse this long letter; burn it, or hide it, for I would not have any mortal man see it upon any account. I beg your Grace not to show it to any of that lofty race so proud of opinion and superior sense; I think I hear Monsieur du Poivre saying 'Does she think your Grace has nothing to do but to read her letters? Must not you go to court, and to the opera, and to the play? Pho!

My mamma had the honour of you-

letter; would you think I was so covetous, I could not help wishing the ink had been all spent upon me; and the letter was so finely wrote that I think my mamma must have a writing master to teach her half a year before she can answer it. We are now a small family; of all the olive branches only my sister and myself. I intend to write to Dash and Pen, but, what have I to say, who am myself what erst I made a jest of, like an owl in the desert, and a pelican in the wilderness?

I am, dear Madam,
your Grace's most grateful, and faithful,
E. Robinson.

To the Same.

January the 27th, 1741-2.

If the world be worth thy winning,
Think, oh think it worth enjoying.

Why does your Grace complain of the embarrassment of that world your merit

draws about you? I may indeed complain that the happy have whole hours of your company while I can scarce get a moment of it. Pray do not compliment my head; such as it is, it is at your service. It is not a head of great capacity, but a great part of the space is unfurnished. I only beg, if you furnish it, it may be with a little more order than your closet; for with heads as with drawers, too full, one can never find any thing when one looks for it. A head made up with the variety of your closet must be excellent for making dictionaries, writing grammars for all the languages spoken at Babel, or a natural history of the creatures in Noah's ark, or for drawing plans of the labyrinths of Dedalus. What a cunning confusion, and vast variety, and surprising universality, must the head possess that is but worthy to make an inventory of the things in that closet! So many things there made by art and nature, so many stranger still, and very curious, hit off by chance and casualty. Shells so big and so little, some things so antique, and some

so new fashioned, some excellent for being of much use, others so exquisite for being of no use at all; accidental shapes that seem formed on purpose; contrivances of art that appear as if done by accident. But how should I describe it? All the Muses, grave and merry, all the Graces gay and elegant, could not sing its worth, its use, its pleasure, and its ornaments. Oh! the windows so full that they let in no light; the tables so heaped one can lay nothing down; and the chairs so loaded, no body can sit upon them. The great abundance that furnishes nothing, and the variety where nought is distinguished? But I offend the mighty Pallas, who says it is her temple, and will not suffer me to laugh at it, and you know how I fear to be a spinster for life; so for fear of her revenge, I will say no more of this pantheon of arts. My love waits on the fair and gentle Dash. I will trouble her with a letter as soon as the fog is gone; but invention is now so low that all honest folks are dull, in which

respectable description I beg you to include,

Madam,

your Grace's most obedient, grateful, faithful, and affectionate,

ELIZ. ROBINSON.

To the Same.

Mount Morris, Jan. 31.

MADAM,

YOUR Grace will scarce believe me if I tell you I have not yet had time to write a long letter. Not time! says my Lady Dutchess, then she has no other material, I am sure. You will want to know how I can have employed that superfluity of time which lies upon my hands; I have done with it as the rich do with their abundance, I have wasted it, lavished it on trifles; and now that I would purchase some real happiness with it, it is spent and

consumed. Your Grace knows I am often prodigal of time, and so it has been with me to-day; for the sun has set upon my idleness, and I have many letters to write; some of them about business, in which I must be concise and explicit; things I cannot bring about without vast labour of brain. I can spin a thread so long it seems neither to have end nor beginning, which serves to give my gentle correspondents an idea of eternity; but though such things are very acceptable to people of much leisure and speculation, a man of business would hardly be content with what had neither meaning nor end, the purport and the conclusion being chiefly regarded by the vulgar. You say nothing of Lady Andover; but whether that implies that she is or is not in town, I don't know, for absent or present your Grace thinks of her very much. Why do you tell me you cannot make a return for my letters? You wrong my heart if you do not believe every line you write makes me happier than my best deserts can merit. I think the days I

hear from you take a happy date from the very hour the letter comes. Those things that before were objects of indifference, by the pleasant disposition of my mind become agreeable. I am ashamed that I uttered some complaints of your silence; but think, when we are touched in the tenderest part, how sorely we complain! I am so unreasonable that I expect your love, your remembrance, your thoughts. Love is very covetous, and I fear I am of a selfish temper, for of the affection of my friends I am very tenacious; if I am not so of other things it is indifference, and not generosity, that I do not see happiness in them, rather than that I slight them from philosophy. The sea of politics runs high; first rates, frigates, barges, oars, and scullers, all running with the stream. We have had all the various reports of rumour conveyed to us by Fame's light horse, the post; and I find hopes and fears fly about extremely. May chastisement mend those that are chastised, and power enlarge the hearts of such as are

advanced! so shall I say amen to all the will of Fortune; but if she fills her house with spirits more unclean than the former, I value the topmost nich in her wheel, less than the lowest spoke in a wheelbarrow. I am glad things go on so quietly; I have but just courage enough to serve me in time of peace; and for riots, seditions, wars and rumours of wars, they sore affright me. I think one man has acted a wise part, but who acts wisely is not therefore wise, says Mr. Pope, in general, and it may be perhaps wonderously applicable to this particular case. However, if this head wants wisdom, it has that ornament which many prefer to it, even that which ambition and pride will stoop to, justice bend to, wisdom submit to, and religion worship with an idolatrous adoration; it is a circle, that bewitches the mind of man; yet the wisest preacher, some thousand years ago, said, a wise child whose head was bound by a homely biggin was better, but the preachers of now-a-days say otherwise. I am glad Sir Robert gets off safe; foe to

his pride, but friend to his distress, I wish he may neither do nor suffer harm. Mr. Pelham's advancement, I believe, is as happy for the public as for himself. There are many honourable men named of all sides to be put in; I do not hear that many are ready to go out. As for the two your Grace mentioned, if a purification be intended I fear it will be necessary they should be done away. I hear Mr. Pulteney will not take a place, which is a noble piece of integrity; but I hope he will not be inflexible, for power is well lodged in those hands that take it as a sceptre of mercy rather than as a rod of rule; and if a person does not value places, they are the fitter to be trusted with them, since they will not then hold them on bad terms. I imagine the study of physiognomy must be very entertaining at present. One might see hope sitting in a dimple, fear skulking in a frown, haughtiness sitting on the triumphal arch of an eye-brow, and shame lurking under the eye-lids; then in wise bystanders we might see conjecture draw-

ing the eye-brows together, or amazement lifting them up. A man in place bringing his flexible countenance to the taste of the present times, smiling about the mouth as if he was pleased with the change, but wearing a little gloom on the forehead that betrays his fear of losing by it. Men that never were of any consequence wrapping themselves up in the mystery of politics, and seeming significant; as if, when times alter, they had a right to expect to be wise. Then the vacant smiling countenances, of those civil people, that would intimate they would do any thing for any body. The asses that, in lions' skins, have brayed for their party, throwing off their fierceness, and appearing in their proper shape of patient folly, that will carry a heavy burden through dirty roads. Then the state swallows, that have ever lived in the sunshine of favour, withdrawing from the declining season of power. Then the thermometers, weathercocks, and dials of the state, will scarce know what to say, how to turn, or which way to point.

They who have changed their coat with every blast, what must they do till they know which way the wind blows? Unhappy ignorance, that knows not if preferment comes from the east, or from the west, or yet from the south! Then what will those noble patriots do, whose honesty consists in being always angry, now they know not whom to be angry with? These occurrences give one too great an insight into mankind, for one receives bad impressions of them by seeing them in these hurries; while, for haste, they leave the cloak of hypocrisy behind, and shew the patched, stained, and motley habit of their minds. There is a danger in seeing others are wicked; it seems to dissolve the covenant of faith, and slackens good will. But when we observe how little peace attends even the success of wickedness, that power cannot purchase friends, nor pomp acquire esteem, nor greatness procure honour, but that the end is contempt where the means are base, it must sure abate the appetite to ill. Power and pomp are of no use but

to make servants and admirers, and could reason but persuade people that if ill acquired, they gain false friends and real enemies, feigned flattery and concealed contempt, not more gazers than censurers, not more noise than ill fame, few would endeavour to obtain a painful and hateful pre-eminence. But flattery "parent of wicked, bane of honest deeds," represents to the great that every servile cringe is zealous adoration, and every self-interested follower a sincere friend. What a deal of pains do some people take to make knaves envy, and fools admire, though they would be ashamed to own they valued the opinions of such people. Strange that the proudest should court the opinions of the most contemptible! I am sure your Grace thinks I am not capable of envy, or you would not have made me liable to the sin, by saying you had so much company that I covet, and that they had your company, which most of all things I covet. I would fain have been any one of you to have been happy with the rest. We are quite alone

here; I am not sorry for it, for I do not like, as some good folks do, every creature that walks on two legs, with a face to look up to heaven or down on the earth, and yet understands neither; an animal that has missed of instinct, and not lit upon reason; one that thinks by prejudice, speaks by rote, and lives by custom; that dares do no good without an example, but dares do evil by precedent; whose conversation is composed of more remnants than a tailor's waistcoat, who snips off every man's superfluous observations to the patching of one sentence; an inconsistency of thought that makes monstrous opinions, and an absurdity of memory that has laid up every fool's proverb as an infallible maxim; one that thinks every thing wise his grandfather did, and every thing foolish that his juniors do; who will not learn, and cannot teach; who, if he does wrong or right, acts from some prejudice he got when he was a boy; so one can neither blame, nor praise, nor love, nor hate, nor laugh, nor cry for him, or any thing he does.

I had rather have the dead palsey than such a companion. Any impertinent lively creature is better than these gentry. I am sleepy with thinking of them; the horrid family of the Gorgons would be as welcome to me. I shall be very glad to hear the Duke and Lady Fanny are well. Adieu, my dear Lady Dutchess; believe, that, as long as I exist, I ever shall be with the tenderest, sincerest, most grateful, and constant affection,

Your's,

E. R.

To the Same.

Mount Morris, March 3, 1742.

MADAM,

IF I had been ill when your Grace's letter came it would have cured me. I am infinitely obliged to you for your kind concern, but am sorry I awakened it by my remissness; my head had been aching

very much for three days, that really I was unfit for any thing but an easy chair in the chimney corner. I was afraid of imparting my thoughts lest they should give you the head-ach or the cramp, but now I am quite well, and live in the hopes of seeing the light of your countenance very soon; when a few hours have run their stages they will bring me to you; but wishes have swifter wings than time, for they bring me to you every instant. An honest fisherman, in a play, says the greatest evils of his life are hunger, thirst, and hope. I think I have not met with a better philosopher; hunger is a great evil to the poor, but it has its remedy; thirst too has its allay; but hope, the hunger of the learned, and thirst of the rich, has no cure, no, nor no abatement. Hope is a vagrant that prefers begging from place to place, and gathering morsels to living at home on fair means with content; it is a vagabond without an honest calling or an abiding place; it cheats us of the present good, and makes beggars of those fortune has

made princes; what have we, who are here but for to-day, to do with the eternal promises for to-morrow? Get thee gone from me, thou restless guest, that cannot live with content upon possession! leave me content for my companion, and I will not ask thee to come as a flatterer; take fear along with thee, as fanciful a creature as thyself, who destroys what is real with a more painful deceit than thou buildest what is but imaginary; each are equally enemies to content. I have more compassion for those who fear to be miserable, than for such as are impatient to be happy; examples of misery are to be met with, but of absolute happiness none; such as have overcome those intruders of quiet, hope and fear, are the nearest to happiness; they have reached content. I have spent some anxious hours since I parted with your Grace in fear, sometimes of not seeing you again for a twelve month, which gave me a heavy depression of heart; at other times, in a nearer hope of seeing you, I was in an impertinent elevation of spirits. Now,

had expectation stood still and quiet, swift footed time had brought the hour of our meeting. Oh that the soul could stay at home and mind its present business, and not go forth in fearful or fanciful prophecies concerning unknown matters! The folly of anticipation! Does not time fly fast enough, that our wishes must outrun it? Is it not powerful enough that our hopes and fears must expect more than it performs? Is the progress of what consumes us too slow? Is the parent of age, the nurse of worlds the teacher of all science, unable to do enough for us, and incapable to bring about our affairs! shall that which lent leisure to the creation of light, and the reforming of chaos, not afford hours for the clearing a doubt, or settling an uncertainty! Shall this midwife to the works of infinity, and the birth of the universe, not bring forth a little accident? I find time to be trusted; it brings about all I would have it do, but that it goes an evener pace than desire; for the future I will rely upon it. Fear may add

weight to my heart, or hope may give wings to my wishes, but they cannot impose delay or haste on Time; he goes on the same pace when Cæsar wants his assistance to conquer the world, or a child to ripen him a cherry; therefore how vain a thing is hope, and how wise a man is my fisherman! Those things determined, I have nothing more to say, but that, whether tyrannised by fear, or deluded by hope, in every disposition of mind, every situation of circumstances, and in every point of time,

I am,

with the greatest gratitude, and affection, and love,

your Grace's

most obliged and faithful,

E. Robinson.

To Mrs. Donnellan.

Mount Morris, 1742.

I MOST sincerely congratulate my dear friend on the recovery of Mr. Percival. I know that Mrs. Percival and you must have suffered extremely for one for whom you have so tender and just a regard. I hope this fear has not worn any traces of melancholy in your memory, but that you are in spirits and health. I cannot help writing to you, as I imagine you may be melancholy. I am no farther sunk in that abyss than dulness; if you can endure that, I will thank your patience, and proceed; I come to you to ask for something to say. I want to know how the world goes on; we stand still here. Dullness, in the solemn garb of wisdom, wraps us in its gentle wing, and here we dream that others do ill, and happy are we that do nothing. One yawns there is peace in solitude; another stirs the fire, and cries how happy is liberty and independ-

ence; another takes a pinch of snuff and praises leisure; another pulls a knotting shuttle out of their pockets, and commends a little innocent amusement; their neighbour more laborious, making a lace with two bobbins, says business should be preferred to pleasure and diversions. How wise is every body by their own fire-side, and how happy every one in their own way! What glorious things do the ambitious say of ambition, and what mighty phrases do they adorn the giant with! How civilly do the indolent speak of idleness, and how prettily do the trifling express trifles; how cunning do those think themselves who live in cities, and how innocent do they look upon themselves to be who dwell in the country; how crafty such as belong to court; how holy they that are of the church;

> See some strange comfort through our lives attend,
> And pride bestowed on all a common friend.

If we are apt to admire, 'tis from taste; if to despise, from our superiority; are we

affectionate, it is from goodness; if indifferent, from philosophy; if we are lucky, what success attends on prudence; if unfortunate, blind chance does all. Self-love, the only honest flatterer, attends on our disgrace, and covers it with indulgent phrases that lean still toward our honour and praise; it dignifies our idleness and justifies our employments, makes our choice prudent, and all our means honest; but though we approve our manner of life, and "our kind of as it were" in the country, we have some curiosity after the actions of those who are employed in public affairs. By the votes of the Parliament, which we have sent down to us, there seems to be much courage and firmness in the senators. I wish, now they seem an independent company, they may do some service to their country; when they are again enlisted under the banners of corruption and bribery, nothing is to be expected, for all ministers are alike; and all I expect, is, to see those that lately have appeared as knaves, look like fools; those that have looked like fools, appear

as knaves. I would the good precept, be angry and sin not, were divided between the parties in power and out of it, that the first would not sin, and the second would not be angry; but between the wickedness of the powerful, and the wrath of the disappointed, there is no peace in Israel. I sent Mrs. Percival some cowslips to town by my second brother, for I would not again trust them with the carrier, who had kept them in his warehouse, where one canister was damaged by the damp so that I could not send it. And I was indeed ashamed to send such a small quantity, but the rest were spoiled by the man's carelessness. Have you music to your soul's content? I imagine to harmonious ears it must be a delightful entertainment, and I wish you much of it; it is wise to make the most of time we may, and let every hour comprehend the most of pleasure that it can. That delight which we do not pay with pain is ever worth seeking; every particular pleasure swells our account of happiness, and it is a false wisdom that

pretends to despise pleasure. We might as well refuse to live, because we do not exist in the eternal and solid duration of time like the Supreme Being, as decline and despise pleasures because they are transient. What belongs to us that is not so? All is succession; fleeting time bears all away. Our fancies mount the wing and fly before our possessions vanish. Our wish obtained, desire goes on and leaves possession as a load behind. I suppose it is in musical entertainments as in life; first, an impatience for the overture and first entrance; then, no less for the opera; tired of that too, discontented at a want of harmony, and ill pleased with the catastrophe, we are glad to leave the theatre. Many people languish through life, as at the opera, from a want of taste; others, too delicate connoisseurs, are over exquisitely pained and pleased. Pain is as much worse than indifference, as pleasure is better, so what temper to choose would be difficult if we had it in our power, but these things are beyond our power. Nature is the master that teaches

tastes; on him depends our disposition of mind, and as it leans we must bend.

I am, dear Madam, &c. &c.

E. Robinson.

To the Rev. Mr. Freind.

Sir,

I congratulate you upon the safe delivery of Mrs. Freind, and the birth of your little daughter, whom I wished handsome for no reason but that she might bear an entire resemblance to her mother: however, one cannot judge at all of her beauty now. Cleopatra and Mother Shipton were born equally handsome. I am glad you have a daughter, for as I am concerned for the honour of our sex, I take a pleasure and a pride in seeing them, as Providence designed them fairest and best of all God's creatures. But though they are by outward form most obliged to nature, in the in-

ward fashion nature is ungratefully allowed no part. Affectation and absurd custom are often made their tutors, and their manners are all art. Dissimulation is looked upon by many fathers and mothers as an accomplishment, and ignorance as a merit; and a woman is turned into the world to act by deceit or folly as either happens to prevail in her mind. I am sure you will give the little demoiselle an excellent education, and teach her it is much easier to be what one should be, than to seem what one is not, which is an œconomy of behaviour those observe who have the thirst of praise without the taste of virtue. The love of praise is certainly a great incentive to virtue, but it is the misfortune of many women to place their vanity upon their beauty; and then it will not make one effort towards worthiness; therefore, it is of great consequence a girl should not look upon beauty as a meritorious thing, but only esteem it as a lucky accident to have her virtues written in fair characters. A book may be very tiresome, though the print

may be fine, and the only advantage is, that the beauty of the letter may induce people to peruse it; but, when we have read it we give our judgment freely. I have often in company given my attention to a handsome woman whom I did not know, out of a strong prepossession that she must talk sense; and have been very angry that such a fine sign should afford bad entertainment. I would have wrote to you last post, but a violent cold had possessed me with such stupidity I was not able to do it. There is some conceit in mentioning dulness as accidental, but that degree of it which allays impertinence is very new to me. I think I never was more low-spirited than I was during the last two days, and I am not yet half well; when I mend you shall have a longer letter, at present it will be a favour to shorten this. I saw some fine jewels that are to adorn my fair enemy, Mrs. S——: I beheld them without envy, and was proud to think that a woman who is thought worthy to wear seven thousand pounds to adorn her person,

should do me the honour to envy and hate me. Her malice, more than my vanity, persuaded me there was some competition between us; but I will never attempt to outshine her in bought or borrowed lustre. Some of fortune's favours I may wish for, but these gewgaws and trinkets I shall never covet. If superfluity were my portion, I hope I should rather make others happy than myself fine with it. Were fortune particularly kind to me, I should rather wish to justify her partiality than to be ostentatious, and surely of all vanities that of jewels is the most ridiculous. They do not even tend to the order of dress, beauty and cleanliness; for a woman is not a jot the handsomer or the cleaner for them. I do not mean to condemn Miss W—— in particular, for this; she has the best justifications vanity can have—beauty and riches. I speak only of the general taste. I should take it as an ill compliment of generosity to address itself to my vanity or extravagance, but it is thought a sign of love and esteem for a

man to make himself uneasy in his circumstances, that his wife may glitter; an intimation from the first that mutual happiness is not the foundation of matrimony.

I am, Sir,
your obedient humble servant,
E. Robinson.

To the Same.

Sir,

We had the pleasure of receiving your answer to our contradictory epistles, which were wrote in that empressement one feels for the concerns of a friend. The poor little man is held to this world by a weak thread of life which the fatal sisters will very shortly snip. I enquire after him continually, that you may be early apprized of his departure. I wonder his victory over the terrestrial part should be so difficult; such a mighty and stirring

spirit seems as if it could easily break through such a poor intrenchment. I am sorry for his decay, for he really made the best of bad materials, and carved both happiness and merit out of the worst stuff in the world. His bodily infirmities he supported with great cheerfulness, and the malady of his mind, his vanity, he turned to generosity; so that with the chief occasion of misery, sickness, and the first principle of self-love, vanity, he was both happy in himself and useful to others. I fear they who would bring good works out of humanity, must work them out of infirmities; for of natural goodness there is not enough for all purposes. Just here came in my mantau-maker to alter an old gown, and I have found how difficult a matter it is to hide a dirty spot in a plain ground; indeed she tells me if there was a full pattern it might be overlooked, or mistaken for a shade in the silk. Thus it is with our moral imperfections; they are hid in the variety of our actions, and escape observation by the intricacy of the design. At

first we wear a fault as I did a spot on the sleeve, but when we perceive the world takes notice of it, we patch it with hypocrisy, and are not at the pains of taking it out, but put it under a plait; and quit the gay content of heedlessness for a wary state of cunning, and dress for the eyes of the world, though conscience knows we are in masquerade. I am sorry I cannot tell you any political news, but there is nothing of that kind stirring, that is of such authority, that one should think it worth repeating. The secret committee is composed of very secret committee men; they say nothing. I was at the opera on Saturday night, where was all the world. I was very well diverted between the opera and the audience, or I ought rather to say the spectators; for they came to see, and not to hear. I heard that the elephant was the finest thing in the opera, but that was contradicted, and the burning of the temple was preferred to it. To accommodate every thing to the absurdity of the town, the dancing is rendered more ridiculous

and grotesque than ever. I was thinking if the court of Augustus could have seen the polite part of our nation admiring a wooden elephant with two lamps stuck for eyes; and poor Scipio and Asdrubal could have risen to have seen themselves covered with silver spangles and quavering an Italian air, what an honest indignation and scorn would they have conceived at us? Scipio would be mightily pleased to see himself represented as the slave to a dimple, a poor creature made of song, silk, and civility. I think it is monstrous that these people should trifle thus with the names of great men. The amours of Narcissus and Echo, the harmonious strains of Nero, or the gentle manufacture of the soft spinning Sardanapalus, are proper subjects for operas; but heroes should not be exposed in an absurd light. It lessens the regard people should have for exalted virtue; and when a man has filled the large voice of fame with his great renown, is it not hard she should suffer his name to be squeaked in treble notes in such ridiculous memorial?

Fame blows so many winds I wonder any should worship her with a constant devotion. Is it not better to be forgotten than to be remembered in the book of folly? When all men are wise general opinion will be worth something: but till then, let Monro prescribe to the love of fame. I am very sorry to hear Mrs. Friend recovers so slowly; my best wishes attend her, but if they had been of any use she would never have been sick; pray let me hear often how she does. My sister Pea is abroad; I am confined again by a little feverishness. I thought as it was a London fever it might be polite, so I carried it to the ridotto, court, and opera, but it grew perverse and stubborn, so I put it into a white hood and a double handkerchief, and kept it by the fire-side these three days, and it is better; indeed I hope it is worn out. On Saturday I intend to go to Goodman's Fields to see Garrick act Richard the Third, that I may get one cold from a regard to sense. I have sacrificed enough to folly in catching colds at the great

puppet shows in town: if I have a rational constitution I shall not be the worse for my entertainment. Pea charged me with her compliments before she went out. We are infinitely obliged to you for your esteem, and will do, (what all will not do for esteem) endeavour to deserve it. I am glad you give me such a good account of my brother's health. Health is an excellent thing, but one may be tolerably happy without enjoying it for oneself, but we may be impatient for our friends, and anxious if they are not well; solicitude for them bears the fair name of tenderness, but when it is employed about our proper persons it grows contemptible; it then becomes our pride to disdain pain, as before in the other case we think it virtue to pity it. I had many compliments from Sir Thomas Robinson at the ridotto; he seems happy in the thoughts of his government. I heard he was to make a princess of Lady Bridget ——, but I hope there is nothing in the report, for Lady Bridget is not rich. What a fashionable exception have I made? and

having passed over the objection of folly, have laid a prudent emphasis upon the want of riches. What an unreasonable letter is here! I will put an end to it; all happiness attend you and Mrs. Freind. May she give you every day the pleasure of seeing her recover health. Adieu; I am yours and Mrs. Freind's most sincere and obliged,

E. R.

P. S. I was obliged to keep my letter two days before I could get a frank to inclose it in: and now to send you all the news I hear, I must tell you advice is come this morning that Anson has taken three ships laden with silver, and is going to Chagre, and from thence to Panama. Vernon and Wentworth are to go with him, and Trelawney is to accompany them to reconcile their resolutions. The courtiers hinted among their threats in the House that the Parliament should be dissolved; the other side said, they that were in that inclination were betrayers of their country.

To Miss S. Robinson.

Whitehall.

MY DEAR SISTER,

I AM just going to the ridotto, so you may flatter yourself with the hopes of a short letter. I proposed writing to you this morning, but was prevented by company, and I have now taken up my pen to tell you that I am well. I have been so prudent lately as to refuse dancing; see what serious lessons time teaches. I was yesterday with Miss Kitty Knatchbull; poor Sir Wyndham is truly afflicted. Some men, you see, still love their wives: a little encouragement for us to venture. For my part, I only desire a man to love me all my life, whether it happens to be a long or a short lease of liking; I will give him his acquittance, and he may like what and whom he pleases afterwards; but while I live he must be mine and only mine; nay, he must guide his thoughts and looks to me, nor go so far as to like any one besides. Such were

Prior's directions to his mistress, and if a man has not as much constancy, as I have delicacy upon this head, he may bestow his wandering affections elsewhere; I am sure I should not value them. Mrs. Botham is at Elford with Lady Andover, which I am glad of, for poor Lydia has a taste for conversation above the hum-drum mediocrity of common understandings. Lord B—— has the gout at Bath, and is by that means detained there, to the sore mortification of the Countess, who would rather read the present page of life than study over Horace or Virgil. You have probably heard Mr. C—— mentioned as Miss M——'s lover; but being by her rejected with all the pomp and pride of prudery, he sought one perhaps less fair, but more kind. The siege was not so tedious here, the lady not having the double ramparts of beauty and fortune; she has however brought a large portion of gratitude and good humour, which must have compensated his loss. I suppose you have taken leave of balls for some time; nothing but

Orpheus's harp, which made trees dance, could make you a ball at Horton. My brother Tom takes the triumph of Mr. M——'s conversion to dancing, from your eyes, to give it to white stockings. Do such strange effects come from the hosiers? His love is in its infancy, according to Prior, since it is now in his heels. Give my love to all at home.

My dearest sister,
I am your's most affectionately,
E. Robinson.

To the Same.

Whitehall.

Dear Sister,

I heartily congratulate you upon your joyful deliverance from dull company, It is a strange thing that while self-love is in all people apparently predominant, any one will prefer a stupid companion to the converse of their own imagination,

yet we sometimes see ingenious persons fond of the insipid, and court their society, rather than live in solitude. For my own part, I am so happily partial to myself, that if I find I am tired of myself, I think it so strong a symptom of dulness, that I am for the time discouraged from producing myself to others. There are many who enjoy a bodily life, and are never pleased but when they are moving from place to place. With them Alma is a mere machine, and just rules the laws of motion, but never finds the benefit of change. There are many people who ride post through the world, and are always running upon a fool's errand. Others have a body as lazy and weak as their minds, and they sit still and pick straws, or play at cards, which they barbarously call killing time. I am going to the play to-night to see Mrs. Woffington act Sir Harry Wildair in the Constant Couple. My brother Matt comes to town to-morrow. I was yesterday at the Dutchess of Kent's, and I called at Mrs. Knight's; and after some more formal

visits I returned home and read very quietly. You see how grave I am when not seduced; but that you may not think me in the vapours, I will own to you that I am to go to an assembly on Monday, the opera on Tuesday, with a long et cætera of gaiety. Lord George Bentinck has been extremely ill; I was very sorry, for he is one of the best natured men I ever saw in a family, and extremely polite and well bred to every body. One of the Trevors is to marry Doctor Alured Clarke; but there is no match like Miss Fane's; so much sense and merit will outshine all the diamonds of the mines, and there is real greatness too. They are both deserving, and I dare say will be extremely happy. I suppose I often send you news that you have heard before; but I would rather run the hazard of being impertinent, than that you should be ignorant. The Westminster election was declared void by a majority of four, to the great joy and triumph of the country party. Admiral Haddock is at Gibraltar with only thirteen ships, the French and Spa-

niards have forty-one, and they coop him up wondrous close. I imagine there will be a second edition of ghosts for Mr. Glover. There is a report (I hope unfounded) that the new Czarina has put the little Czar, the Great Dutchess, and the Duke of Brunswick to death. Ambition loves human sacrifice, and I think it is in all respects a cruel power. Its votaries must sacrifice their own ease and honesty, and often much more, to gain its favours; and when we have got the rich trifles and serious bagatelles of fortune, we must make anxiety their guard. Jealousy attends on power, avarice, and riches; much care is wanted to keep what we cannot enjoy. Most frequent is the fabled punishment of Ixion and Tantalus. The head that covets power is troubled with a restless giddiness, while grasping avarice is punished with eternal thirst. I had an excellent letter last week from C——. She has discovered a great deal of truth without one moment's study. There is a felicity of genius that despises opportunity and method; I should as

little have expected moral reflections from her, as from the keeper of a raree-show, as she passes her life among the puppets and wax-work of the world. Reason can seldom find her disengaged, and as for reflection it can hardly catch her at home, and alone. What a friendship in Miss ——! I should sooner choose Greenland for my climate, than a friend of so frigid a heart and head.

I am, my dear sister,
your's very affectionately,
E. Robinson.

To the Dutchess of Portland.

Friday, Aug. 6, 1742.

Dear Madam,

I return your Grace a thousand thanks for your letter; the good wishes of a friend are of themselves a happiness, and believe me I have always thought myself the nearer being happy because I knew

you wished me so. If your affection to me will last as long as my love and gratitude towards you, I think it will stay with me till the latest moment I shall have in this world; no alteration of circumstance, or length of time, can wear out my grateful remembrance of your favours to me; you have a station in my heart, from whence you cannot be driven while any one virtue lives in it; truth, constancy, gratitude, and every honest affection guard you there. Mr. Montagu desires me to make his compliments to my Lord Duke and your Grace, with many thanks for the favour his Grace designs him of a visit, which he is not willing to put off so long as our return from Yorkshire, but will be glad of the honour of seeing the Duke on Monday, at seven o'clock, in Dover Street; and I hope at that most happy hour to have the pleasure of seeing you. We shall spend that evening in town. If you will be at home to-morrow, at two o'clock, I will pass an hour with you; but pray send me word to Jermyn-street at eleven,

whether I can come to you without meeting any person at Whitehall but the Duke; to every one else pray deny your dressing room. Mr. Freind will tell your Grace I behaved magnanimously; not one cowardly tear, I assure you, did I shed at the solemn altar; my mind was in no mirthful mood indeed. I have a great hope of happiness; the world, as you say, speaks well of Mr. Montagu, and I have many obligations to him which must gain my particular esteem; but such a change of life must furnish one with a thousand anxious thoughts. Adieu, my dear Lady Dutchess, whatever I am, I must still be with gratitude, affection, and fidelity,

your's,

E. Montagu.

To Mrs. Montagu.

Hildersham near Linton, August 17th, 1742.

MADAM,

I SHOULD have paid my compliments earlier on the joyful occasion of your marriage, if I had known whither to address them; for your brother's letter, which informed me, happened to lie several days at Cambridge before it came to my hands. My congratulation, however, though late, wants nothing of the warmth, with which the earliest was accompanied; for I must beg leave to assure you, that I take a real part in the present joy of your family; and feel a kind of paternal pleasure, from the good fortune of one, whose amiable qualities I have been a witness of, from her tenderest years, and to whom I have ever been wishing and ominating every thing that is good. I have always expected from your singular merit and accomplishments, that they would recommend you

in proper time to an advantageous and honourable match; and was assured from your prudence, that it would never suffer you to accept any which was not worthy of you: so that it gives me not only the greatest pleasure on your account, but a sort of pride also on my own, to see my expectations so fully answered, and my predictions of you so literally fulfilled. As all conjugal happiness is founded on mutual affection, cherished by good sense; so you have the fairest prospect of it now open before you, by your marriage with a gentleman, not only of figure and fortune, but of great knowledge and understanding; who values you not so much for the charms of your person, as the beauties of your mind, which will always give you the surest hold of him; as they will every day be gathering strength, whilst the other are daily losing it. But I should make a sad compliment to a blooming bride, if I meant to exclude her person from contributing any part to her nuptial happiness; that is far from my meaning, and yours, Madam.

I am sure could not fail of having its full share in acquiring your husband's affection. What I would inculcate therefore is only this; that though beauty has the greatest force to conciliate affection, yet it cannot preserve it without the help of the mind; and whatever the perfections of the one may be, the accomplishments of the other will always be the more amiable; and in the married state especially, will be found after all, the most solid and lasting basis of domestic comfort. But I am using the privilege of my years, and instead of compliments, giving lessons to one who does not want them. I shall only add, therefore, my repeated wishes of all the joy that matrimony can give both to you and Mr. Montagu, to whose worthy character I am no stranger, though I have not the honour to be known to him in person, am with a sincere respect,

Madam, your faithful friend,
and obedient servant,

CONYERS MIDDLETON.

To the Dutchess of Portland.

Allerthorp, Thursday 21st August, 1742.

MADAM,

I DO verily believe your Grace half condemns me for not having wrote before to you; but I will give your curiosity ample satisfaction, and your indignation an entire pacification, before I have finished my letter. That I did not write upon the road is very accountable; first, I was lazy, which is sometimes the case; secondly, I was stupid, which I will not take upon me to say is not always the case; but the truth is, I was dull without a zest of the pert or impertinent; and so, thirdly and lastly, I said nothing, because I had nothing to say. On Tuesday I arrived at this place, not tired of my journey, but satisfied therewith. As far as Nottingham you will travel very soon, and then as far as Doncaster, therefore it will be but impertinent to give you an account of the road or any thing concerning it. I

will only tell your Grace I saw Nottingham castle, where there is beauty and magnificence worthy the wisdom and the riches of your ancestors. As we came nearer to this place the country grew more wild but not less beautiful; we came through some rivers that charmed me beyond all things: whether they were once melting maids, or weeping lovers, I don't know; but since the world is grown laborious those idle tales are forgotten which once were sung to the happy shepherd's oaten reed. I am surprized you do not fix a time for going into the country. I imagine you will spend your Christmas there; but did ever any one go into the country above a hundred miles to gather snow-drops, or take a winter's blast? We have at present very fine weather, the sun gilds every object, and I assure you it is the only fine thing we have here, for the house is old and not handsome; it is very convenient, and the situation extremely pleasant; we found the finest peaches, nectarines, and apricots, that I have ever

eat; your Grace will think I mean turnips, carrots, and parsnips; but really and truly they are apricots, peaches, and nectarines. To-morrow, I believe, will be one of the happiest days I ever spent; I am to go to fetch my brothers from school; how delightful will be such a meeting after so many years separation! I am glad Dupp remembers no more his labour and sorrow, for joy that a male child is born into the world: I think no man better deserves a child; the end justifies the means, else what should one say for his extreme, surprizing, amazing fondness for the lady? It is very indelicate to be so fond of all that composition of julep, jalap, pill and bolus; her breath must smell like a gallipot of physic, and a box of salve, endearing charms to an apothecary, but un peu degoûtant to a man of quality. "To bring such a slovenly corse betwixt the wind and his nobility!" I am glad there was a child; but pray was there not a little souterkin for the joy of the lady's relations? Pray is the Dupplinnetto so

like his father as to talk to the first ear he meets? I imagine my lady will never suffer it to learn to walk, because that is too rude an exercise. I imagine, when it is eight years old, instead of going to Westminster School, it will be sent to Apothecaries' Hall, and there have its stomach improved till it is able to digest Album Græcum. I am glad Lord Dupp enjoys his liberty and leisure; the repose a gentleman takes after the honour of sending a son into the world, may be called ease with dignity. Mr. Montagu begs his compliments to your Grace and my Lord Duke; my sister desires the same.

I am his Grace's most obedient, and ever my dear Lady Dutchess's most obliged faithful and affectionate,

E. Montagu.

To the Same.

Allerthorpe, August the 24th, 1742.

MADAM,

WHAT can your Grace be doing in town at this time, that you neglect the memory of departed Fidget? I know London cannot afford you at this time either business or diversion, and yet you write not; are you setting Chaos to rights, teaching Mr. Achard patience, or Lord Titchfield deliberation, or what mighty or impossible work have you undertaken, that you are thus cruelly engaged! I have got my three brothers with me, un très-bon mari, and a huge family to take care of, all new acquisitions, and I write and your Grace replieth not, answereth not. You know I am so very a sister I cannot help talking of my brothers; I find them just as I would wish them, sensible, good-natured, and sober, and the most affectionate towards each other of any children of their age that ever I saw; they have very good characters at school,

both as to their learning and behaviour; but the quintessence of perfection is my brother Jack. I had a letter from Mrs. Donnellan last post, who tells me, you will stay a fortnight longer in town, which I believe is not disagreeable to you, and verily a day in your house is better than ten thousand in the dwelling of the formal; you must bid adieu to that happiness that knows no hours, and the sweet liberty of pinning your ruffles at dinner-time, the valuable privilege of making every meal wait till it is cold, and the noble prerogative of having the coach wait at the door for two hours: all those difficulties of life which you now conquer like prudent Fabius by delay, you must encounter in haste; and in short your life, which hitherto has been the finest impromptu extant, must now be all readiness and compliance with the tyranny of time; the clock which for many years has been your most neglected slave, will now be your very punctual governor. Alas! that your Grace should ever be

compelled to make use of your watch! I have wrote twice to you before I have once wrote to my congratulating correspondents; but to-morrow I shall begin to thank my well-wishers, who, I believe, are very good people, for I think their prayers have prevailed which they offered for my happiness. My friend C—— S——— is going to be married to Mr. B——, a man of great riches in prospect, and twelve hundred per annum in present: she is a very good young woman; the man is a little simple, but Miss S—— is not critical in understandings, and there is sense in twelve hundred a year, so I rejoice at the match, as I believe she will be very easy; happy is a choice word, and not to be profaned; however, if he is simple she has good sense enough, and he has a tenacious prudence that will hold fast his estate: it must be irksome to submit to a fool; the service of a man of sense is perfect freedom; where the will is reasonable, obedience is a pleasure, but to run of a fool's errand all

one's life is terrible. My best wishes ever wait on the little ones.

I am, dear Madam,
your most obliged, and most grateful,
E. Montagu.

To Mrs. Freind.

Allerthorpe, August the 27th.

Dear Cousin,

I am ashamed that I have not before answered your kind letter, and returned thanks for those good wishes of whose accomplishment I hope there is the fairest prospect; I think we increase in esteem without decaying in complaisance, and I hope we shall always remember Mr. Freind and the fifth of August with thankfulness. I am infinitely obliged to Mr. Freind for not letting the knot be tied by the hands of an ordinary bungler; he was very good in coming to London on purpose, but he did not give his last

benediction, but stole away before my sister or any of us were come down stairs. We arrived at this place after a journey of six days, through fine countries, where the riches of harvest promised luxury to the landlord, plenty to the farmer, and food to the labourer. Here we are situated in a fine country, and Mr. Montagu has the pleasure of calling many hundred pounds a year about his house his own, without any person's property interfering with it; I think it is the prettiest estate, and in the best order, I ever saw; large and beautiful meadows for riding or walking in, and all as neat as a garden, with a pretty river* winding about them, upon which we shall sometimes go out in boats. In this parish Dr. Robinson, our general uncle, has founded a school and an alms-house, where the young are taught industry, the old content: I propose to visit the alms-house, very soon. I saw the old women with the bucks upon their sleeves at church, and the sight gave me pleasure; heraldry

* The Swale.

does not always descend with such honour as when charity leads her by the hand. Our uncle did this good while he was alive; it was not that soulthrift that would save itself with another's money. I hope you will forgive my not having wrote to you before, but a new family, and a new place, must take up one's time. Our house here is tolerably convenient, and that is all that can be said for it: we have a better, which I hope you will often see in Berkshire. Pray, when you and Mr. Freind have a leisure hour, dispose of it in writing to me. Mr. Montagu has an estate near Rokeby, from whence I intend to visit Sir Thomas Robinson's fine park, of which I hear great praises.

I am, dear Madam,
your most affectionate cousin,
and obedient humble servant,

ELIZ. MONTAGU.

To the Dutchess of Portland.

Sept. 19, 1742.

My dear Lady Dutchess,

There is a great pleasure in conversing with a friend in this manner, when the thought goes from my heart directly to your's without passing through the ways of ceremony, or suffering the enquiry of curiosity. I have accordingly sent this by the way your Grace directed, that I might enquire into the real state of your mind, and discover the situation of mine. I assure you your letters to me, and mine to you, pass under no examination. My friend is above curiosity and suspicion of any sort, and is always pleased at my taking all opportunities of conversing with you after this or any other manner. He would gain a heart by generous and kind usage, but never confine one by severity and constraint: he is never better pleased than at any instance of affection that

passes from me to my friends, or from them to me; and is entirely sensible of the happiness, honour, and advantage of your Grace's friendship to me. I hope you had my letter which I wrote to Welbeck, in which I took care to make you but the second person, though in my thoughts you will ever be the first, even among the queens and princesses of the earth. I want to know how you go on, what you suffer from certain important nods, and significant whispers, pretty embellishments of silence, or a pause in conversation, if a pause there can be where there is that most voluble orator. It is surprising what nothingisms make a figure in polite conversations; repetition is a sign of emptiness, yet there are living echoes, where dwells sound without sense or invention. The nymph Echo of old, was in love with Narcissus; the Narcissus's of these days are in love with Echo; fond to hear themselves say what others think for them.

I went last week, with my sister, to see Lord Ailesbury's place; nature has done

much for it, but art has forborne her aid. I suppose the wild graces of Tanfield will be outdone by the improved beauties of Studley: but, for my part, I should prefer a belle sauvage to an accomplished court beauty. Our pleasures seem too much prepared and studied, but those we find in a mere natural scene appear accidental, and free from labour and contrivance, those enemies of surprise, and preparers of expectations, the great anticipator of human joy. Sir Miles Stapylton called to-day, when I was preparing to write to you. Lady Stapylton is at Beaconsfield, by which I lose one of my best neighbours; I would that in the balance of fortune some of the worst were there.

I am, my dear Lady Dutchess, &c.

E. Montagu.

To the Same.

Allerthorpe, Oct. 2, 1742.

MY MOST DEAR FRIEND,

LOVE is the fulfilling of the law; your Grace orders me to write to you a sheet of quarto paper brimful; behold, my inclination, exceeding your command, has chosen a folio. Most glad I am to lengthen out the time I may thus employ: how few conversations are there wherein the head or the heart are interested! if the country would afford a few reasonable companions, or burthen us with none that are not so, it would really make life a different thing; but for me, who have not any sociable instinct, to lead me to creatures me ely human, and, I think, scarce rational, it is really not a place of uninterrupted felicity. I do hourly thank my stars I am not married to a country squire, or a beau, for in the country all my pleasure is in my own fire-

side, and that only when it is not littered with queer creatures. One must receive visits and return them, such is the civil law of the nations; and if you are not more happy in it in Nottinghamshire than I am in Yorkshire, I pity you most feelingly. In London, if one meets with impertinence and offence, one seeks entertainment and pleasure only, but here one commits wilful murder on the hours, and with premeditated malice to oneself become felo de se for whole days. For an antediluvian a dining visit was proportioned to the time he had to throw away, but for the juniors of Methusalem to be thus prodigal of life, is the way to be soon bankrupt of leisure and happiness. Could you but see all the good folks that visit my poor tabernacle: O, your Grace would pity and admire! you make complaints of a want of conversation; to your sighs I reply in murmurs. When may I hope for our meeting in London? Till you come, kings palaces and high places appear desolate. The Parliament, I hear, will meet on the 15th of Novem-

ber, but you did not use to come up till January—a barbarous and heathenish custom; though when I was passing time in the delights of Bullstrode, I was of another opinion. Oh Bullstrode, Bullstrode! when I forget thee may my head and hand forget their cunning! A small loss perhaps you will think for the most unpolitic head, and the most unskilful hand in the world; but their little savoir faire is necessary. I hope to see Bullstrode again before my eyes grow dim with age, and, what is more presumptuous, to see the honour and ornaments of Bullstrode at Sandleford. Mr. William Robinson is just come, I must go down to him.

I am returned again to my dear Lady Dutchess; I stole from the company below stairs, after they had drunk tea, and have again for the thousandth time read over your delightful letter; you have brought wit out of——and——; verily I had not known the trees by the fruit, but you can work wonders when you please. They are indeed half as witty as Sir John Falstaff; that is, they are the cause of

wit in other people. Your account of them is extremely entertaining! but I forgot that you never could write tolerably, but were always a mighty dull correspondent; you have told me so a thousand times, and it is a strange thing I never could remember it. I should be glad to have a party of horse to guard your letters, but for mine I am assured they will go very safely by the by-post; if I revoke I will pay two tricks, as they do at cards. I am sorry my first letter was not so formidably formal* as it should have been, but, to say the truth, I thought if it was too much upon the serious, it would be suspected of being wrote for the occasion. As for what I said of Don, if ——likes her, we are of the same opinion, if not, we shall not be rivals. I said, in my last letter, that I should not write to you till I had finished my peregrinations, and intimated that I should forbear troubling you with a letter till I could send your Grace a map of

* The Dutchess was unwilling to shew the whole of their intimate correspondence to Lady Oxford.

Yorkshire; you may suppose that was said on purpose to prevent any enquiries after my letters, for as to my travels, the serjeant's circuit round the fire would be a tour as well worthy of memory. Pray when shall you visit the noble family at Brodsworth? I wish I was in their neighbourhood; I fancy it is a paradisaical family, and having the honour to be in some degree of favor with your Grace, I should hope to be admitted to their acquaintance. I honour their manner of life, and affection for each other; to maintain continual cheerfulness, without the gay pleasures of our great city, is great praise. Oh that you were to go, with only the Duke, to Brodsworth, and that Doncaster were within a day's journey from hence, I have love for your company that would, if not remove mountains, pass them. We might meet at Doncaster, if it were not for that odious impediment of almost all human desires, impossibility. I should be much diverted to hear that Desdemona was enamoured by these stories passing strange; the hero

being a fair man into the bargain, and having, in all hair-breadth 'scapes, received not one scar: it is not impossible but something wondrous pitiful may be awakened in her tender heart. I return a thousand thanks for your long letter; I rejoice that the Duke and the little angels are well.

I am, Madam,
your Grace's ever grateful, affectionate,
faithful, humble servant,
E. MONTAGU.

To Mrs. Montagu.

Hildersham, Oct. 4, 1742.

MADAM,

I SHOULD have paid my thanks much earlier for your obliging and entertaining letter, if business of various kinds, and the cares of farming and printing, in both which I am engaged, had not constantly prevented me, till I was forced to a resolution of being prevented by them

no longer. I now therefore beg leave to assure you, that your letter gave me great pleasure on many accounts, but above all, by letting me see that you were not only perfectly at ease, and happy in your late change of condition, but furnished with all the materials proper to secure that happiness for life; since the principles which you lay down for your conduct in it, cannot fail drawing every good out of it, which it can possibly yield. Young ladies who have been admired as beauties, are apt to consider an husband as an acquisition of conquest, and to be shocked at the thought of being reduced by marriage to a state of subjection, and from a resolution to shake off this yoke, often lay the foundation of a contest which begins with matrimony itself, and continues sometimes to the end of it. But this capital point you wisely give up at once, and profess the duty of submission as essential to the character of a good wife; a condescension, that can never betray you into any inconvenience, since a reasonable husband

will never require more of it than is due, and a kind one always be content with less; and when convinced of the disposition, will generally dispense with the act. As your profession, I dare say, is sincere, (for you have not had experience enough to make it the effect of art,) I may trust you with a paradox, which you will certainly find to be true, that the more submissive you are, the less you will be obliged to submit; and should it be your ambition even to govern, you will acquire it with the most ease by acknowledging yourself a subject.

Between a married couple of sense and affection, for it is with such only that any happiness can be found, there can hardly happen any dispute but what must turn upon trifles, or the contrast, perhaps, of some little habits, which, though indifferent in themselves, cannot suffer a contradiction without some regret. But as these are common to both sexes, and every person has his foibles in some degree or other, it must be the business of reason to make this matter easy by mutual

compliances, or a cartel, as it were, of exchange, where those, however, who happen to yield the most, will by that conquest over themselves, which of all others is the most beneficial, be sure to be the greatest gainers in the end. As I have formerly been a musician, so a reflection has sometimes occurred to me, from that art, which might be applied, I think, with good effect to the married state; for from the pains and patience, which are required to put an instrument in tune, before it can afford us any music, I have been induced to wonder why the married pair, who are mutually the instruments of that harmony on which each other's comfort depends, should be generally so regardless of the necessary care of tuning, or reducing each others temper to its proper tone, by softening it when too sharp, and raising it when too low; for I am persuaded that much less pains, than what we employ, without scruple upon an harpsichord, would keep both the husband and wife in, what we call, concert pitch. But some perhaps may be apt to raise a

different reflection from the same subject; that discords in matrimony, like those in music, are both useful and necessary, to enhance and strengthen the harmony of the close. But the comparison will not hold, for the experiment of them will always be dangerous in the married state, where they may be compared more justly to those slight indispositions of the body, which, though they do not threaten the ruin of the whole, yet are apt to weaken some part; and whose proper use is to admonish us to guard our health with the greater care. In short, if two enemies should be forced by any accident to be comrades for life, the necessity of the thing would soon oblige them to become friends. The same reason then, one would think, should more strongly engage a pair of friends, tied together by choice and affection in a partnership inseparable, to extirpate every seed of discord, that might possibly arise betwixt them. I have thrown together these few observations from my long experience of the

married life, not by way of counsel, which you do not want, but in confirmation of those excellent resolutions which your own good sense has suggested to you, and as a testimony of my regard and sincere wishes for your prosperity.

I was much pleased with the account that you gave of your brothers, who after being exposed, as it were, on the mountains of Yorkshire, were discovered at last, like enfans trouvés, by a sister unknown to them. I shall always think myself particularly interested in their success, for they were all born under my roof, which may one day perhaps derive an accession of fame from that circumstance. If I should live to see any of them in the University, it would be a pleasure to me to do every thing in my power that might be of use to their improvement.

I hope that you have found leisure to pay your intended visit to Edgely, for whatever entertainment that excursion may afford you, your relation of it, I dare say, will be entertaining to your

friends. The country, as I remember, abounds with natural beauties, but of so wild and romantic a kind, as make the scene fitter for a landscape, than an habitation; and you, who have so good a hand at description, cannot fail to make a fine picture of it. By this time I suppose you begin to think of quitting the country, and returning to your winter quarters in town; Cambridge is but a little out of your road, where we should be proud to receive you at our house. We may plead some kind of right to expect this favour from you both, since this University had the honour of Mr. Montagu's education, and claims some share also in yours. I did not know that your sister was with you, or I should have added our compliments to her, which I desire you to make; and with our wishes of all the happiness to Mr. Montagu and yourself, beg leave to subscribe myself, with the greatest truth,

Madam,

your affectionate friend, &c. &c.

Conyers Middleton.

To Mrs. Donnellan.

Allerthorpe, October the 10th, 1742.

My dear Friend,

I had the pleasure of finding your letter upon my table last night at my return to Allerthorpe, from whence I had been three days upon an expedition to a wild part of the country called the Dales, where nature's works are not delicate, pretty, and mignonne, but grand, sublime, and magnificent. Vast mountains, rocks, and cascades, and rapid rivers make the country beautiful and surprising: we went to a farm abounding in wonders, a high hill with some hanging wood before it, behind it a large and rapid river with the prospect of a huge cascade, an old castle, and a church. Some houses in view take from it the honour of absolute solitude; a range of rocks appears like the ruins of an old town on the other side of the river. In the cottage built in this charming place, lives an old woman who

has attained to an hundred and four years, and for this long lease of life has not exchanged the best comfort. She enjoys good health, tolerable strength, has her hearing perfect, and her sight very well; is cheerful, and has not lost her reason or apprehension, but answers with sense and spirit; her hair is of a fine black: she was knitting when we went to her, and has promised to knit me a pair of stockings in a month. My father had a house in this part of the world for the summer sports of shooting and fishing, so that the old woman and I had been well acquainted fifteen years ago, and she told me, laughing, she imagined I did not expect to see her alive at this time. If the near prospect of death is terrible, it is a melancholy thing to live till every day of added life is a miracle; but such is the happy and merciful order of things, that hope is eternal, and therefore we cannot outlive it. It has for our amusement the midsummer's dream, and the winter's tale; and the ear, deaf to all other music, is

still soothed by its flattering voice. You may suppose my old woman is no philosopher, or I would enquire of her what pleasure she had in reflection on the past, possession of the present, or prospect of the future time. Can this world be still a land of promise for her? After so long and weary a journey of life, can hope still lead her by the hand? She remembers the siege of the old castle in Oliver's days, but her billet at the fire was found,

Whoever was deposed or crown'd.

The storms of fate that shake the cedar, sweep lightly over the creeping ivy, and the humble moss; she was too low for the tyrant to oppress, too poor for the usurper to rob, so that all the revolutions of our kingdom have not affected this little subject. I am very glad I am not in any danger of living to this age, for with most people the last page of life is a blank or a tragedy; either insensibility or suffering; and one becomes an object of pity or contempt to the young, or of terror to those approaching age. I return

you many thanks for sending me the means of being warm: the carrier is not yet arrived. I thank you for your prudent foresight in making the mantle large enough: I hope in time I may be worthy of it; but at present the jumps are of a virginal size. As for my complexion, I cannot greatly commend it, but for qualmishness, I am never maukish but when things are too sweet or folks are too civil. Do you think I would be guilty of such an indecorum as to be in so unprudish a way already? I am glad Mrs. Dewes has not suffered so terribly this time. I hope poor Pen has not been in such fear: as for Pen, she is not a daughter of Eve, but of the collateral branch of Enoch, who walked as an angel before the children of men. I know she would not be guilty of such a grossièreté as having a child for the world: she is a perfect Seraphim, all fine music and pure spirit, and must be grieved her sister should condescend to such mortal matters; indeed, nothing is less divine and angelical than a breeding woman; sick with

a piece of toast and butter, or longing for a bit of tripe, liver, or black-pudding. I am obliged to the little Pere for remembering me. If matrimony does not spoil my philosophy faster than it mends my constitution, I may be very philosophical. Tell Mr. Courayer* my head is as much troubled with chimeras and giddiness as ever. I fear he is too fond of variety in life to be a friend to matrimony: the merriest man I have seen in Yorkshire is a Frenchman, who came here for religion, and has had the needful of life added unto him; he has a little estate, and lives with the mountain nymphs, liberty and health, in the Dales; he amuses himself with singing to his grand children, mending his clothes, and making soup; his grandson eats soup with him; and his next darling, le petit chat, helps him off with the bouillie; he can not only make a fine dish of the cabbage, but of the snails and caterpillars, and what we call the unprofitable

* Translator of Father Paul's History of the Council of Trent, and of Sleidan's History of the Reformation.

vermin that live upon it; there was not a creature in Noah's Ark that would not be received into his larder, for a Frenchman is seldom so proud of stomach as to term any thing unclean. I have had the pleasure of hearing often from our amiable Dutchess; may health and content ever go along with her! You say nothing of your own health, for which you know I am always anxious. Pray, if the design of your journey to Ireland is laid aside, let me have the satisfaction of hearing it. We must come to town for the Parliament, and I believe not till then. I suppose the P—— depends upon a certain person's coming from abroad. I shall be very glad to be as near you as Dover-street is to Bond-street; but if it were not for you and my brothers, I could be content to stay here till spring. I suppose you have got Lady Sunderland and Lady Catharine Hanmer in town. I should think Mrs. Duncomb would not stay much longer in the country; if she is in town, pray make my compliments, as also to Miss Sutton. Mr. Montagu.

desires his particular compliments to you: you both deserve each other's esteem, which I think is saying the civillest thing I can to you and to him; you are the best of friends, and he is the best of husbands. I am very happy in a few, which makes up for my want of joy in the multitude, for you know I like but few creatures upon two legs, and none upon four; as for the Ringwoods called squires, or hounds, the Cupids and Dappers called beaux, or lap-dogs, they delight not me; nor parrots, nor fine ladies, nor gossips, nor magpies, nor geese, nor hens, nor notable women: some have a capacious heart that can take in the whole creation; my affections are more contracted.

I am,

dear Madam, your most affectionate

E. Montagu.

To the Dutchess of Portland.

October 17th, 1742.

MADAM,

I SHALL be extremely mortified if your Grace does not tell me that last week, by a kind of natural impulse, you sung "Patrick Flemming sat on a mountain," for I was acting the part of Patrick of renowned memory: I was sometimes upon the most magnificent mountains, at others in the most agreeable vallies, in the thickest woods, and the fairest lawns, by the prettiest murmuring streams, the finest smooth-gliding rivers, the highest roaring cascades; on moors immeasurable, in narrow lanes almost impassable; through sandy ways and rocky roads. All this appears mere fiction, by the serious opprobriously called rodomontade; but it is really a truth; the mountain is a great and unquestionable witness, and the cascade loudly declares the truth of what I say. All these wonders are to be met with in Bishop's-dale; we went to

Mr. Buckle's (whom you have heard me mention for his care of my youngest brothers), to spend three days; his house is but a mile from that we used to pass the shooting season in, when my father was fond of that diversion; so that nothing was entirely new; but though the lapse of fifteen years has not altered the objects, it has my apprehension of them. The country is perfectly unlike what I have ever seen in other parts of England. I wish my letter could be so affected by the recollection of the place I was in, that my style might be sublime and lofty as the mountain, flowery as the vale, or rapid as the cascade, or smooth and deep, and gently-gliding as the river; but I was so ill after my jaunt as not to be able to write, and if I had wrote in such suffering circumstances, you neither would have commended the writer nor the writing. My disorder was owing to fatigue: rest and repose, no strangers to the country fire-side, have entirely recovered me, and I am now perfectly well, and in spirits. Had I wings, I would

pierce the recess of your dressing-room, turn study and meditation out of doors, and banish silence from the place, sit down, talk with you, tell you stories, ask you questions,

> And hear and see you all the while,
> Softly speak, and sweetly smile.

When the bell summoned you to soup and ceremony, adieu, jusqu'au revoir, and the country mouse would retire to Allerthorpe, in like manner as recorded by pleasant Master Æsop, and rehearsed by the ingenious Lady Harriet Bentinck. Mr. Montagu desires his compliments to your Grace and my Lord Duke; we talk of you and drink your health as often as you can expect from sober people. Had I married a Tory fox-hunter he might have toasted you in a larger draught; but for temperate Whigs we do you reason.

I am, my dear Lady Dutchess's most grateful, and most affectionate

E. Montagu.

To the Same.

Allerthorpe, October the 30th.

MADAM,

I IMAGINE your Grace has lately had two very troublesome letters from me; but the charity of your friendship will cover my multitude of sins; so for my transgression of all good manners I will make no more apologies. I am infinitely obliged to you for desiring two sheets of paper full of my ingenious thoughts, but really methinks meditations upon a fire-shovel, and such other matters as come within my observation, ought not to spread themselves over such a vast extent of paper. As to forbearing to tell news, though I am, by natural constitution, prone to tell all I know, yet shall I utter no news, for in very truth I hear none; we Yorkshire folks are very ignorant and barbarous; I cannot be of opinion that this sharp air gives a keen wit; for I have met with many a blunt genius here. If it were as safe for me as it would be pleasant to go

to London, I should be right glad thereof, for I am a very swallow, and cannot abide the country in winter. I love peace with pleasure; but I have such a tendency to dulness, that I am afraid of mere tranquillity.—I love to be a spectator of the rapid world while my little machine is at rest; the actions and passions of others keep me awake without so far disturbing the constant mood of my calm thoughts, as to make me uneasy; but the lullaby of conversation that one's country visitors entertain one with, affects me with a very intolerable drowsiness: the news and chat of this country touches me no more than the Jewish chronicle does a modern infidel prime-minister; then the panegyric the good people bestow on each other finds no echo in my breast, though, in the hollowness of civil insincerity, I may sometimes be forced to repeat it after them. I assure you it is wonderful, to see people so little admirable so much admired. By the courtesy of Yorkshire, every one is wise and good-natured, with a long et cætera

of virtues, whose existence they only know by hearsay. The Duke of Cl——d is reckoned a good agreeable man: poor creature! is he not fulsome enough without the daub of nauseous praise? A commended fool is that offensive compound, a sweet and a stink: praise that passes from the wise and judicious, to the virtuous and excellent, is sweet in the sense of all men, the reward of past good deeds, and the incentive to future noble actions; but undeserved commendation, flying at random, destroys the value of good fame, by misapplying it. Shall this fairest jewel in the crown of virtue be cast to the common herd? Farewell then all that makes ambition virtue. It is common to cry out that the world is censorious; I think there are so many other vices to which mankind are more prone, that we might better say, it is a covetous world, a luxurious and an ambitious world, &c. &c. &c. I believe other vices do so far exceed this humour that there are more wicked than condemned people. Censure is bitter indeed, but it is a wholesome

bitter, like wormwood, that preserves the wary breast from the infection and contagion of corrupt and vicious times; it is that necessary

> Something beyond the letter of the law,
> That keeps our men and maids in awe.

Many, I fear, would act absurdly if it were not for the fear of ridicule, and wickedly, but for the fear of reproach. Satire is the wholesome medicine of morality that purges and purifies; but it is the sick and not the whole that have need of medicine; to wound innocence is the most unpardonable fault a person can be guilty of. Truth is always divine and holy, and wholesome when severe, but pleasant when it is sweet and gentle; every opportunity of praising merit is grateful to the virtuous mind,

> The quality of mercy is not strain'd, but blest alike
> In what it gives and what it takes.

But weak indulgence, masked in mercy's garb, is a very pernicious impostor. You see, my dear Lady Dutchess, I am sur-

feited with this sweetness of conversation here; I fear at London there will be too little charity; but I shall have some friends there who are not afraid of speaking any thing but untruth, and with such is the freedom of conversation; and I am now forbidden the toil and trouble of visiting, and, like other people of a contented disposition, find happiness in my infirmities. I fear, now my trouble abroad is diminished, my happiness at home will be so, for I imagine it will be impossible for Mr. Montagu to delay his journey beyond the meeting of the Parliament; nor indeed can I wish he should, for I think it is the duty of those in the House to attend; and as I believe he never omitted any thing he ought to do, I would not have him begin now. My sister and I shall be a little at a loss for conversation, not that I shall on my part want words, but, like school-boys when they are about their exercises, I may want to borrow a little sense now and then. I wrote to Lady ——— a little while ago; I am

sorry to hear of her want of happiness, but it is thinly sown in this world, and only falls in the lot of the independent; as for absolute independence indeed, there is no such thing in nature; but I mean freedom from fear. The ties of love though the strictest bands, are easy, those of interest galling. I am extremely concerned at Lady Oxford's and the Duke's illness; pray tell me if your Grace would have me write a visible letter. I should be infinitely obliged to you if you would tell me when Whitehall will become a Paradise to the soul of Madam Fidget. I am always asking about your going to town, but not a word of reply can I extort. How happy will our meetings be this year, free and unconstrained! my little tabernacle shall be sacred to friendship, and its best votary and greatest ornament the Dutchess of Portland. When shall I have arrived at the utmost limit of my love for you? I have long thought I could not love you more, but my regard is ever increasing; I am very

happy if you love me in any proportion to that sincere tender, and faithful affection with which I am,

Madam, ever your's,

E. Montagu.

To the Same.

Nov. 5.

Madam,

My heart and hand are too much yours to permit me to employ another's to dictate, or write to your Grace, when I am able to do it. I had your letter, for which I am obliged to you: I feel all the sensibility of friendship when I reflect you are unhappy. I hope my Lord Duke will have no more of the complaint in his stomach. Lady Oxford really knows her remedy, and I hope you will prevail upon her Ladyship to go to Bath. I had not any letter from Dr. Sandys, but you know he has always a very tedious

labour when he goes of a letter. I wish he was well delivered of this, for I am impatient to know my doom; whether I am to sit here, like patience on a monument, or may be allowed, in my quondam character of a Fidget, to bustle into the bustling world. My appetite for the country is satisfied, and I should like to see London fine town again; and I shall be a poor wife (pity, but for the verse, it were maiden) forsaken,

> Yet must bear a contented mind,
> But when leave of me he has taken,
> I can't have another as kind.

The last line sets forth the melancholy circumstance. As for single ladies, the loss of a lover is nothing: for, as Millamant says, one makes as many as one pleases, and keeps them as long as one pleases; but it is worth while to take care of a good husband, for they are reckoned rarities. I am pretty well at present, but I don't much like this sort of constitution. I believe Sandys would not tell his wife a secret for fear she should

go abroad to tell it, and, you know, he loves she should sit, like sober puss in the corner, to offend all those who would annoy the cheese, or other good things in his cupboard; for, I guess, it is from some principle of œconomy that he keeps her at home.

I am, Madam,

your Grace's faithful, humble servant,

E. M.

To the Same.

Allerthorpe, Nov. 19, 1742.

MADAM,

WHAT prophets are my fears! they whispered to me your Grace was not well, and I find their suggestions were true. Hard state of things, that one may believe one's fears but cannot rely upon one's hopes! I imagined concern would have an ill effect on your constitution; I know you have many pledges in the hands of fate, and I feared for you, and every

thing that was near and dear to you. I am sensible your regard and tenderness for Lady Oxford will make you suffer extremely when you see her ill; she has therefore a double portion of my good wishes, on her own and your Grace's account. When sensibility of heart and head makes you feel all the outrages that fortune and folly offer, why do you not envy the thoughtless giggle and unmeaning smile? "In Folly's cup still laughs the bubble joy." Wisdom's cup is often dash'd with sorrow, but the nepenthe of stupidity is the only medicine of life; fools neither are troubled with fear nor doubt. What did the wisdom of the wisest man teach him? Verily, that all was vanity and vexation of spirit! A painful lesson fools will never learn, for they are of all vanities most vain. And there is not so sweet a companion as that same vanity; when we go into the world it leads us by the hand, if we retire from it, it follows us; it meets us at court, and finds us in the country; commends the hero that gains the world, and the philo-

sopher that forsakes it; praises the luxury of the prodigal, and the prudence of the penurious; feasts with the voluptuous, fasts with the abstemious, sits on the pen of the author, and visits the paper of the critic; reads dedications, and writes them; makes court to superiors, receives homage of inferiors; in short, it is useful, it is agreeable, and the very thing needful to happiness: had Solomon felt some inward vanity, sweet sounds had been ever in his ears without the voices of men-singers, or women-singers; he had not then said of laughter, what is it? and of mirth, what doeth it? Vanity, and a good set of teeth, would have taught him the ends and purposes of laughing, that fame may be acquired by it, where, like the proposal for the grinning wager,

> The frightfullest grinner
> Is the winner.

Did not we think Lady C—— would get nothing by that broad grin but the tooth-ache? But vanity, profitable vanity, was her better counsellor; and as she always

imagined the heart of a lover was caught between her teeth, I cannot say his delay is an argument of her charms, or his gallantry, but she has him secure by an old proverb, that what is bred in the bone will never out of the flesh, and no doubt but this love was bred in the bone, even in the jaw-bone. No wonder if tame, weak man is subdued by that weapon with which Sampson killed the mighty lion. Mr. Montagu got well to London on Monday night. I am glad your facetious senator is gone to Parliament, where all his conversation will be yea, yea, and nay, nay; and even of that cometh evil sometimes. Time will not allow me to lengthen this epistle with any thing more than my sister's compliments to your Grace.

I am, Madam, your's, &c.

E. M.

To the Same.

Nov. 28, 1742.

MADAM,

I AM very sorry I have not received all the letters your Grace has been so good as to write to me; Fate received them into her left hand, and I am deprived of them. I am glad to hear your spirits are better; may circling joys dance round your fire-side,

> With Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
> And laughter, holding both his sides!

for life is too short to allow for melancholy fears and intruding cares, which are apt to fill up the youthful time, when we are fittest for happiness. Age will bring its solemn train of woe; let us therefore admit all Youth's gay company, smiling Joy, cheerful Mirth, and happy Hope; life's early Hours come dancing along with their fair partner Pleasure, but in the evening of our day they tread a

heavy measure, dragging after them weak Infirmity and sad Regret,

> Expense, and after thought, and idle care,
> And doubts of motley hue, and dark despair.

I grieve whenever I think your mind is pained; all infirmities and diseases of the body are nothing compared to anguish of heart. I am now in the highest content; my little brothers are to go to Westminster as soon as the holidays are over, and what adds still to my pleasure in this is, that Jacky's going is owing to Mr. Montagu's intercession for him with my father, who did not design his going to Westminster till next year: our youngest, I believe, is to go out with our new captain. I would give a great deal for a tête-à-tête with your Grace, mais helas! ma pauvre tête n'est pas une tête ailée. It would have been a strange and unnatural thing that Dr. Sandys's letter should have miscarried; my faith has swallowed his advice, and my throat his pills; so I have endured the country, and taken his physic, very unpalatable things both. I

am pretty well, but I do not like to sit, like puss in the corner, all the winter, to watch what may prove a mouse, though I am no mountain. I am rejoiced Lady Kinnoul, and the young ladies, are with you. I cannot boast of the numbers that adorn our fire-side; my sister and I are the principal figures; besides there is a round table, a square skreen, some books, and a work-basket, with a smelling-bottle when morality grows musty, or a maxim smells too strong, as sometimes they will in ancient books. I had a letter to-day from Mr. Montagu, in which he flatters me with the hopes of seeing him at Christmas. I hear your Grace's porter says you will not leave Welbeck these two months, and Elias is no lying man. I know full well, however he may deny you by parcels, he will not thus in the gross; so, I imagine, you will not be in London this age, which makes me more contented with being in the country. My Lady Croakledom is croaking on the banks of Styx, where, with Cerberus's barking mouths, and Tysiphone's belle

chevelure, she will make a most pleasant melody: with such a noise in his ears how glad would Pluto be if Orpheus would give him a tune once more! Lady Limerick, imagining I came to town with Mr. Montagu, sent an excuse, that being ill, she had not been able to make me a visit. I guess it would raise great speculations why I was not come up, and had you been within question-shot, the good Countess had popped off a volley upon you, I make no doubt. I hear Lord Cobham and Lord Gower are going to resign; and, I hope, with less regret than I resign my pen; but the letters are sent for. Time is a monarch that commands, as many sovereigns do, to the vexation and detriment of their subjects, therefore, to show my loyalty to King Time, I must obey his minister, the hour, that commands my letter hence. My sister desires her compliments.

I am, my dear Lady Dutchess,
your most grateful and affectionate,
E. Montagu.

To the Rev. Mr. Freind.

SIR,

I THINK I hear you exclaim against long letters from a sober yawning fire-side in the country, and, I own, my paper makes a formidable appearance; but you shall find it so little stained by any tincture of thought, or colour of imagination, that you shall own it differs little from blank paper, the most innocent and inoffensive thing in the world. I know it will please you to hear that I have, every day since you made me a wife, had more reason to thank you for the alteration. I have the honour and happiness to be made the guest of a heart furnished with the best and greatest virtues, honesty, and integrity, and universal benevolence, with the most engaging affection to every one who particularly belongs to him; no desire of power but to do good, no use of it but to make happy. I cannot be so unjustly diffident as to doubt of the

duration of my happiness, when I see the author of it dispensing content to all his dependants, and should he ever cease to use me with more care, generosity, and affection, than I deserve, I should be the first person he has ever treated in this manner. Since I married, I have never heard him say an ill-natured word to any one, nor have I received one matrimonial frown. His generous affection in loving all my friends, and desiring every opportunity for my conversing with them, is very obliging to me. We have often pleased ourselves with the hopes of seeing you frequently in Dover-street this winter; but, alas! I am a prisoner at Allerthorpe, and the worst of prisoners, confined by infirmities and ill health. Mr. Montagu went to Parliament ten days ago, to my mortification, but with my approbation. I desired him to go, and half wished him to stay; I knew his righteous star would rule his destiny; so I helped him on with honour's boots, and let him go without murmuring. He left me my sister, and where she is there will

happiness be also. Her temper is continual sunshine; she smooths the rugged brow of winter, and, without gloom or storm within doors, we sit contented, though the elements disagree, or the sun refuse to shine. We have not been troubled with any visitor since Mr. Montagu went away, and could you see how ignorant, how awkward, how absurd, and how uncouth the generality of people are in this country, you would look upon this as no trifling piece of good fortune; had they with their ignorance the naiveté of an ingenuous untaught mind, or the integrity of honest and unexperienced simplicity, I could admire the intrinsic worth of the ore, though it had rust upon it; but, for the most part, they are drunken and vicious, and worse than hypocrites, profligates; I mean more offensive, and I know not whether less pernicious: but do not mention this, for they will not mend themselves, but may hurt others. I am very happy that drinking is not within our walls; we have not had one person disordered by liquor since

we came down; though most of the poor ladies in the neighbourhood have had more hogs in their dining-room than ever they had in their hogsty. I hope you will write to me soon; post days are great comforts to us, and keep our affections awake for our friends. I imagine you will have seen Dr. Middleton's Translations of the epistles by this time; pray tell me what you think of them, I want much to see them; I love the noble fierté of Brutus, in that letter the Doctor translated in the life of Cicero, where Brutus reproaches him with having asked their lives of Octavius; the Doctor objects that there is little policy in it; perhaps it may want a little human prudence, but it has a divine spirit in it; no sophisticated arguments, nor fine-spun politics to prove that right which was wrong till it was profitable and advantageous. How many Brutus's shall we see in our senate this year? Shall they who last year "struck the foremost man i'the world," * now contaminate their fingers

* Sir Robert Walpole.

with base bribes? Those who wanted to turn him out, and now would screen him, must have coveted his power, without hating his actions, and are, I think, as void of modesty as of honesty. I hope the few righteous will save the city, and that those who have sacrificed their virtue, honour, and reputation, and have passed through infamy to mammon, will find that their peace of mind was made a victim too; but, alas! all, all look up with reverential awe,

> At crimes that 'scape, or triumph o'er the law;

and the successful wicked are more the envy than the detestation of mankind. I often think that those people are happiest who know nothing at all of the world, and sitting in the little empire of their fireside, where is no contention or cabal, think we are in a golden age of innocence; for those who are gaining a knowledge of the world are blotting their minds with a register of black deeds, and, except the little Pharisaical triumph that one is not as these Publicans, what

satisfaction can it give? Does the seeing that the generality of men are corrupt, either reward our benevolence, or encourage it? Some people are endued with an apologizing quality that covers spots; but gall, honest, bitter gall, is the only thing that takes out the grease and filth. It is the business of true charity to cure faults or prevent them, and not to conceal them. Just censure is to be encouraged, for the fear of blame is the best antidote against the poison of vice; and I love not that excess of goodness, that temper, flowing with milk and honey, that can whiten and sweeten a black and corrupt reputation. Let me repeat my request that you would write soon, and tell me when you keep your residence.

I am, dear Sir, &c. &c.

E. Montagu.

To the Dutchess of Portland.

December the 5th, 1742.

MADAM,

AFTER being sunk into stupidity by the company of a strange kind of animal called a country beau and wit, how unfit am I for the conversation of the Dutchess of Portland! But it is your Grace only that can recover me from the lethargy I am fallen into, therefore, in the spirit of charity, allow me to take up my pen to write to you. When one has been some hours contemplating a human creature who cannot attain the perfection of a monkey, even the art of mimicry, how lowly does one esteem one's species! Let me raise my opinion of them by dedicating the remainder of this evening to the conversation of one who is an honour to our kind. Had you seen the pains this animal has been taking to imitate the cringe of a beau, and the smartness of a wit, till he was hideous to behold and horrible to hear, you would have pitied

him; he walks like a tortoise, and chatters like a magpye; by the indulgence of a kind mother, and the advantage of a country education, he was first a clown, then he was sent to the Inns of Court, where he first fell into a red waistcoat and velvet breeches; then into vanity: this light companion led him to the play-house, where he ostentatiously coquetted with the orange-wenches, who cured him of the bell-air of taking snuff, by abridging him of his nostrils. Grown even in his own eyes no very lovely figure, he thought Bacchus, no critic in faces, would prove in the end a better friend to him than Cupid; accordingly he fell into the company of the jovial; till want of money and want of taste led this prodigal son, if not to eat, to drink with swine; he visited the prisons, not as a comforter, but as a companion to the criminals; shook hands with the gold-finder, and walked in the ways of the scavenger; so singular his humility, none were his contempt. At last having spent his money, ruined his constitution, and

lost all the little sense nature gave him, he returned to the country, where all the youths of inferior rank admiring his experience, and emulating his qualities, and copying his manners, grew, some fit for jail, others for transportation: those who went the least length, grew fit for nothing good. Notwithstanding all these vices, and the most nauseous effect of them, all people treat him civilly, and one gentleman in the neighbourhood is so fond of him, as, I believe, to spend a great deal of money, and most of his time, upon him. Alas! that hours, and days, and years, should be given to those who thus mis-spend them! While the learned die in the search of useful knowledge, the beneficent is made to cease his good works, the virtuous no longer allowed to set a good example, the righteous judge is cut off in the administration of justice, and the patriot falls while he is defending the liberty of his country; sure, these are the heirs of eternity; and then the longest life here is but a span, and may be lavished equally

on all, else, sure, this precious gift of time, by which may be purchased wisdom, honour, and renown, would not be lent to those who with no fair act have sanctified one day, have never wiped tears from the miserable, given comfort to a friend, or assistance to any one. But the ways of Providence are veiled from human sight; it is enough that by its visible works we see that all is dictated by unerring wisdom, and unexhaustible goodness; there let ever our proud questions end, and so sink our presumptuous enquiry. Mrs. Meadows * has behaved in every thing greatly to her credit and my satisfaction; she is, I believe, unfeignedly glad of my present condition; for my part, I hope it is for the best, and that it will hereafter be a subject of happiness; but in all our addresses to Heaven, we should be earnest only in thanksgiving. Of what is past we only are the judge, blind and unknowing of what is to come. You

* Mr. Montagu's sister, wife of Mr. afterwards Sir Sydney Meadows.

know my heart is unfit to bear the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," and now she will find me vulnerable in the tenderest part, even maternal fondness. Without the dearest concerns, life has no interesting scenes for us; exempt from affections and duties, where can arise our merit and our happiness? Old age is in itself comfortless and joyless; hope ceases to promise when time has little more to give, so that unless our affections are kept living in those we love, for whom we may rejoice, enjoy, and hope, every agreeable sentiment is banished from the mind, regret seizes on our past lives, and pain and weariness possess the present time. Old age,

Last scene, that ends our strange, eventful story,

must seem a horrid period to an useless life; but if we are fortunate in our posterity, see our best virtues likely to bloom in them, and our fortunes flourish with them; our youth and life is lengthened to another generation. This thought will warm our hearts when the blood freezes

in our veins; hope and joy shall attend our latest hour; but if, instead of this, we bury comfort in the dear shape of our beloved children, great are the pangs indeed! I will not dwell upon this sad subject; but hope cannot come without doubt and fear in her train; that still I find joy corrected by a thousand gloomy apprehensions. Your Grace is singularly happy in your little ones; such amiable tempers, beautiful forms, and good constitutions, seem to promise all delight to you, and happy exulting pride; I hope they will answer your hopes as fairly as they promise them. Oh my friend!

May each domestic joy be thine,
Be no unpleasing melancholy mine!

Your happiness will ever be an addition to mine. I hope I may this year enjoy your company with more freedom, than when the higher powers were to be consulted before I could have a room to myself. Mr. Montagu is too sincere and kind a friend not to rejoice at your friendship for me, which he knows is an honour and a

happiness to me. Letters are sent for: I can add no more.

I am, Madam, yours, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To Mrs. Donnellan.

December the 5th, 1742.

DEAR MADAM,

I AM sorry to find my dear friend has so little of health, the first and chiefest ingredient of happiness, that heavenly composition, so rarely to be met with on earth. I had designed to write to you as soon as I knew of your return from Twickenham, for while you continue ill I must renounce the pleasure of your letters, and content myself with hearing of you by Mr. Montagu. I am much obliged to you for your good wishes; it is supposing there is something better than mere tranquillity and ease of mind, to desire objects of so near concern and fondness; I know

not if it is according to the true estimate of human happiness, but it is agreeable to our common way of judging of it: we are not apt to wish to collect ourselves and our possessions into a very small compass; we ask for many blessings, though we are sensible the keeping them is precarious, and the parting with them grievous: impatient players at the game of fortune, but yet fond to get in our stakes! The exercise of every virtue that nature has implanted makes up the merit of humanity; many are made deaf to the calls of virtue by the storms of passion, or an indolence of mind; and the best may most triumph in their faculty of reflection, for by this is our happiness raised above brutes; they act always according to instinct, our greatest merit is only to do so too, but we are allowed to reflect on this rectitude of habit with joy and pride. We do best when we follow nature; they never deviate from its rules. If the stoic's pride, the philosopher's learning, or the hero's presumption, would lift them above humanity,

they are no more to be commended for their courses than the wild comet that runs blazing, with unconfined and unaccountable motion, through the vast universe; the learned will determine it to be out of its way, and describe its wandering journey, but it will raise superstition, error, and mistake, in the minds of the vulgar, who fondly pay greater worship to this wandering meteor, than to the right regulated planet: though every thing is really best moving in its own sphere, however bright and illustrious they seem out of it. I hope I shall find happiness in acquitting myself justly of the humble duties of a private family; I shall aspire to no higher character than that of a good woman. Those who endeavour to reconcile the good wife with the reputation of a beauty, a toast, a wit, and I know not what, have the art of bringing together things in their natures contrary. To be very serviceable to one's family, with spending only the hours of sleeping in it, may be above my art; my heart will always be open to my friends,

my house to the agreeable, and I will take a moderate share of diversion abroad; but my attention is to my own fire-side, and this, I assure you, is merely my own inclination; for though Mr. Montagu does every thing that can make my home agreeable, he has never by the least hint recommended to me to stay in it. Writing is in itself very uneasy to me; I am often obliged to do more of it than is agreeable to my constitution, but I know, at this time, my friends are more attentive to my demonstrations of love to them, than before I changed my way of life; but were my heart of such light inconstant stuff as to alter to my friends by any difference of situation, I should not think my affection a present worthy of Mr. Montagu's acceptance, and should rather settle it upon a toy-shop, than offer it to him. I expect Mr. Montagu here the latter end of this month, but he is obliged to wait for some law business, that he cannot come down as soon as the Parliament breaks up for the holidays. One finds great loss of a cheerful, agreeable

companion in a place as retired as this. I am afraid I should murmur at his absence even in our great and populous city; for that illustrious body, called the beau monde, cannot atone for the want of a sincere, kind friend. Gratitude and esteem attribute to one person, what one cannot find in a thousand; and those who seek true happiness in a crowd, seem ever seeking what they never find. If our spirit of love once gets out of the ark, like Noah's dove, it finds no resting-place; our family and friends are those from whom we must expect happiness, the rest is a raree-show; there is the representation of fine things indeed, but it is mere deceit; diverting and innocently amusing to those who look upon it as no other than what it is; but if, Don Quixote like, we dignify it with our fancy and chimera, there is both absurdity and danger in the mistake. Believe me, my dear Mrs. Donnellan, your sincere, faithful, and unalterable friend.

E. Montagu.

To the Dutchess of Portland.

Dec. 28, 1742.

MADAM,

I HAVE contrived that my letter shall lay in ambush for your Grace against your coming to town, that it may pay you compliments of congratulation upon the happy occasion of revisiting our charming metropolis, and, at the same time, give you the wishes of a happy new year; which, I hope, will bring to you new pleasures, and preserve to you all your already attained happiness. I have wrote to the ladies, and Lord Titchfield, to date myself their correspondent from the year 42-3; I mean for the young ladies; as for his lordship, I think he will like Seneca's head and morals as well as my face and company, some twenty years hence; I have already a long pale face that affrights all the Cupidons, either with or without wings, equally terrible to those of the isle of Paphos, or the isle of Great Britain. But

no matter; if I had Cupid's bow and quiver, in truth, not even for rhyme's sake, would I pierce either heart or liver; Hymen, I hope, has secured one heart to me, et un me suffit, and that one is nobly furnished with all virtues, and liberality and humanity to crown them. I suppose your Grace will see the owner of it when he returns to London; at present, I guess he is in Berkshire. Mr. Montagu was to have come here this week, but the law's delay has kept him from her, whom except your Grace, you must know, I think the best wife in the world; but pray take my opinion for it, for 'tis said man and wife are not always of one mind about any thing, and perhaps especially on this subject; so pray inquire no farther, but have a catholic faith in my goodness, and implicitly believe all that my infallibility shall affirm about it. I expected to have heard last post, when Mr. Montagu would come to fetch me to your great city, but lo! the terrible law, when it fastens its paw, does so confine people, that they may not

stir; but he desires me to come to him; indeed, he says he will meet me, which will fulfil the decorum; for it would be vast offence to prudery to pursue one of that sex from which we ought to fly, as say all mothers, grandmothers, and especially maiden aunts. However, next Sunday sennight I shall set out; to my inexpressible joy, I shall change the whistling of the wind for the voice of my friends and mirth; oh, blessed vicissitude! I had rather live in Æolus's den than in the country at this time of the year without the voice of, at least, ten people, of which one talks and nine laugh, for a small family is not sufficient to drown this hollow wind. Dr. Sandys says I may travel, and he speaks like a Solomon; I shall move as slowly as a fat corpse in a hearse; but the coach making a progress still forward, I shall at length get to my journey's end. Your Grace asks me if I have left off footing, and tumbling down stairs; as to the first, my fidgetations are much spoiled; sometimes I have cut a thoughtless caper, which has gone to the

heart of an old steward of Mr. Montagu's, who is as honest as Trusty in the play of Grief à la mode. I am told he has never heard a hop that he has not echoed with a groan. I have taken such heed to my goings I have not gone down stairs more than by gradual degrees. I hope you have found all your friends well; I reckon they will gather together about you as soon as you get into your house. I wish I could make one of the happy assembly; after a sober journey of ten tedious days I may get to town. At your Grace's desire I have read Mr. Hervey; I think he has some very good thoughts; but there is, in my opinion, a great deal of absurdity with now and then apparent nonsense. He says some pretty things on friendship, but the subject is worthy the tongue of angels, or angel-like mortals; there must be a mind of more steadiness and harmony than his to comprehend it. Solomon, I think, says the best things on friendship. Friendship is the glory of humanity; the philosopher speaks of it with pride, and the powerful with osten-

tation, but its true kingdom is founded in the heart that is free from the low vices of avarice and luxury, or the high ones of ambition and glory; for it is often sacrificed to mean ends or great desires. The man who, I think, best heard its voice amidst the tumults of a public life, was Cicero. I have known people boast of firmness in bearing the loss of friends, that would have fretted at being robbed of ten pounds. Swift says very well, that he never knew any man who could not bear another's misfortunes perfectly like a Christian; and, indeed, I have seldom known fortitude, or even the word made use of, but in regard to those misfortunes that did not touch the person. Many are calm spectators of another's woe; few resigned sufferers of their own. I fear your Grace will find poor Mrs. Donnellan in a bad state of health; I wish to see her, and yet I am afraid her illness will damp the joy of our meeting. What you say of conversation is a melancholy truth; if it was not for redundant impertinence of foolish people, and

the pragmatical dryness of some sensible ones, I should think the gift of speech a much greater ornament to humanity; as for fools, it is a sin for sensible people to keep company with them, the very worst offence, sin against oneself; they are unsafe, unpleasant, and unprofitable company. I never knew any ass but Balaam's, that either spoke truth, or gave good advice; they do not intend to deceive, but they have the misfortune to be ever mistaken, which is equally pernicious to those with whom they converse. Their conversation tends only to encourage one's prejudices and errors; but conversation is a nice composition, flattery is hurtful, reproof painful. A true reasonable companion is a valuable and rare blessing; by their opinion one may reform one's faults without smarting for them. With the flatterer one grows ostentatious, and with the censurer reserved; the friend that is

> To all one's virtues very kind,
> To all one's faults a litte blind,

cherishes the first, and gently mends the

other; but I must take my leave; I have the clock's admonition for it; while it struck out the quarters, I could bear its warning, but now growing peremptory, like an importune adviser, I hate its voice.

I am, Madam,
your Grace's, &c. &c. &c.
E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Dover-street, 12 *July*, 1743.

MADAM,

You desire much of my thoughts, and many of my words; as for the first, I cannot help their rambling after your Grace, and of the latter you know I am not retentive. All the gift of tongues, bestowed on mankind, are retired to Mr. Finch's, in Saville-row; the general voice lives there in the person of the Countess of Granville. I went there with Mrs. Meadows on Sunday, and, lo! we found

whispering in her ear either Mrs. P—— M———, or envy and scandal in her shape; she vanished at our entrance, but her spirit thundered from the mouth of the ancient oracle; she fell with all her violence on my complexion, and behold she certainly, by her description, takes my forehead to be tortoise-shell, my cheeks to be gold, my eyes to be onyx, and my teeth amber; all these are precious things, but Mr. Montagu not having so rich a fancy as King Midas, I know not whether he would like such a wife. Your Grace may believe I was extremely mortified. The good woman says, Mrs. Meadows looks better and younger for being married; but for me, I am pale and green, and describes me as worse than the apothecary that lives about the rendezvouz of death, in Caius Marius. She is of opinion that lying-in has spoiled my face: true it is I have furnished a noble pair of chops to the little boy, and if mine are a little the lanker for it I scarce grudge it. I wish your Grace had been present; we

had many good scenes, but the scene of tenderness and sorrow was the best of all: she sighed, and tossed, and thumped, and talked, and blamed, and praised, and hoped, and used the greatest variety of expression, and suffered the greatest change of temper, that ever poor soul did; most pathetically did she break out, giving an account of Lady Carteret's death! "Poor dear Lady Carteret got her death going abroad with a cold; for if poor dear Lady Carteret had a fault—not that I know that poor dear Lady Carteret had a fault—nay, I believe, poor dear Lady Carteret had not a fault—but, if she had a fault, it was that she loved to dress and go out too well—you know poor dear Lady Carteret did love to dress and go out: and then you know she never spared herself; she would talk, always talk—but it was to be so, it was ordained that she should die abroad." All this, yea, and much more, more than mortal memory can register, did she utter in a breath. Had her eloquence had one happy

interval for me to have made my honours and escaped, how blest had I been! but as Mirabell says of Lady Wishfor't, echo must wait till she dies, to catch her last word. I was forced to leave her in the midst of her chat, but I shall resume the thread of her discourse next winter, for, I dare say, it will run on as long as the fatal sisters spin the thread of her life. She asked after your Grace, and gave a very cordial and friendly hum and thump of satisfaction upon hearing you was well. The old woman shewed a love for Miss Carteret, which makes me think she has more goodness than people suspect her of. I shall return to the shades next week. I am much obliged to you for your kind enquiry after the young Fidget, who loves laughing and dancing, and is worthy of the mother he sprang from; thank God, he is very well, and I am reasonable enough to think so. As for Mrs. Donnellan she is well, Mrs. Delany is better than well. Lady Wallingford came to town on Friday; I have seen her only according to Peter's phrase in the

Drummer, in the shape of the sound of a message.

I am, Madam,
most gratefully, and affectionately, your Grace's obliged and devoted

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Sandleford, near Newbury, 1743.

MADAM,

IF I was as good a poet as Boileau I would complain of l'embarras de Londres, and also of l'embarras de la campagne, and of the still greater embarras of travelling from one place to the other. When I had the happiness of your letter I was so encompassed with boxes, trunks, portmanteaus, and even the lesser plague, of band-boxes, that I could not give myself the pleasure of writing to your Grace. Bag and baggage we arrived here on Thursday night; first marched

the child crying, nurse singing, and the Abigails talking; Mr. Montagu, my sister, and myself, brought up the rear. We had fine weather and a pleasant journey; we took a boat from the inn at Maidenhead-bridge, and rowed round his Grace of Marlborough's island. I had the pleasure of reflecting on the agreeable morning I had spent there with you. I sacrificed a gentle sigh to the manes of the departed day, but thanked the gentle Fates that spun it so fine, though, like coarser clue, it is now wound up on the common bottom of departed time, which may not again be unravelled. The sylvan deities, the jolly Pan, and the bounteous Ceres, are affrighted from the island by some terrible cannon planted on the borders of it; sad symptoms of the iron age. The halcyon bird did thereupon take his flight, and the portentous raven lives in that sweet bird's forsaken nest; and, since the violation of the silence of this island, Astrea has never ventured so near the court and city. The walnut-trees still thrive, and grow full as fast as the

laurels. I think Fame does not, at either end of her trumpet, proclaim the deeds of the heroes abroad. I am of your Grace's opinion, that the rumours of war are terrible; the ambition of the mighty, which "cries havock, and lets slip the dogs of war" upon mankind, is surely greatly sinful. Are we not subject to too many diseases, calamities, and kinds of death by nature, but we must tear each other to pieces, and deal about the arrows of destruction? Oh! that we would keep the covenant of the just, that it might be well with the children of men. I could wish that you had perfect health without interruption, but these colds are bad things. Dr. Courayer dined with us the day before we left town; he was more elated with having a letter from you than he had been dejected with the overthrow of the French; he looks well, and his mind always seems the seat of tranquillity. Donnellan promises to come down here soon; I hope she will stay till I go to London to be inoculated. I am sorry for what you tell me of Lady

Wallingford; I fear she is in a very ill state of health. Mrs. Meadows has promised to take the child while I am sick, and I am best satisfied that it be with her, for I am sure she will take great care of it; and, thank God! it is a very strong healthy child; indeed were he otherwise I should not leave him, for, I think, when they are sickly no one can be tender enough for them but a parent, who feels their little woes, and endeavours to redress them as if they were their own afflictions. Nature gives better lessons to the heart than reflection can, and nature is always in earnest; reason and duty have but their turns. Exalted and refined sentiments do sometimes great things, but natural affection is always present, and therefore the life of the parent is always of infinite consequence to the infant, since no one can take the place of a mother; the tenderness that lives in her, must die with her. Boys, indeed, have soon enough of us, for with the manly habit they often put on a manly contempt of womankind, and at three years old are

frequently ashamed of that ensign of our order, a fan; but a drum, more noisy and empty, they honour as a folly of their own kind, and for what I know, as king-errantry is coming into fashion, it may be the glorious bagatelle of the world; but for us poor women, life will be all a farce and all a ladle still, for I think Lady Carteret's ill success in following the big wars will deter other ladies from adventures abroad. Mrs. B—— is a very good woman, and has excellent sense and wit; but a cast of particularity, with a want of softness in her manners, robs her of the good opinion she would otherwise gain. It is of great consequence to a woman to keep off all disagreeable manners, for the world does not mind our intrinsic worth so much as the fashion of us, and will not easily forgive our not pleasing. The men suffer for their levity in this case, for in a woman's education little but outward accomplishment is regarded. Some of our sex have an affectation of goodness, others a contempt of it from their education; but the many

good women there are in the world are merely so from nature; and, I think, it is much to the honour of untaught human nature, that women are so valuable for their merit and sense. Sure the men are very imprudent to endeavour to make fools of those to whom they so much trust their honour, happiness, and fortune; but it is the nature of mankind to hazard their peace to secure their power; and they know fools make the best slaves. I will write a very very serious, formal letter, as your Grace orders, next post.

I am, Madam,
your Grace's most obliged and obedient,
E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

* *Sandleford*, 1743.

I SHOULD have wrote to your Grace before this time if I could have found time

* Sandleford was a priory for Austin canons founded in the year 1200, by Geoffrey Earl of Perche, and Maud his wife.

for a long letter, or resolution for a short one, but both were out of my power; this very hour was appointed by the Fates, and this very sheet of paper, no doubt, cut by them for the purpose. I did not leave London so soon as I proposed by a day; my brother came to town on purpose to make us a visit, and we put off our journey till Tuesday, on that account. I had a very pleasant journey to this place, where I am much delighted to find every thing that is capable of making retirement agreeable; the garden commands a fine prospect, the most cheerful I ever saw, and not of that distance which is only to gratify the pride of seeing, but such as falls within the humble reach of my eyes. We have a pretty village on a rising ground just before us,

> Where the cottage chimney smokes,
> Fast betwixt two aged oaks.

Poverty is there clad in its decent garb of low simplicity, but her tattered robes of misery do not here show want and wretchedness; you would rather imagine

pomp was neglected than sufficiency wanted. A silver stream washes the foot of the village; health, pleasure, and refreshment are the ingredients that qualify this spring; no debauch or intoxication, arises from its source. Nature has been very indulgent to this country, and has given it enough of wood and water; the first we have here in good plenty, and a power of having more of the latter, as improvements are undertaken. Here are great temptations to riding and walking. I go out every evening to take a view of the country; the villages are the neatest I ever saw; every cottage is tight, has a little garden, and is sheltered by fine trees.

Just here was I interrupted by a parson, his wife, and daughter; and I shall not be reconciled to prunello and grogram again a great while; they have robbed me of those hours I could have dedicated to your Grace. The post goes from hence at two o'clock, it is now past twelve; we are to dine at Mr. Warren's, so I must finish my letter. Oh, sacred

leisure! whither art thou retired, since the shades hold thee not? Shall impertinence pierce the sacred recess of the woods dedicated to silence and contemplation? What oracles shall the hallowed oak deliver now every magpye perches and chatters there? I hoped to have passed some days far from the busy hum of men, but society has found me out, and even papers containing rumours of war, with all its pomp, its pride, and circumstance. I know your Grace is glad we have conquered, but while the sun of glory sets in blood I do not desire its beams to shine on us; commerce is our friend.—But I must put an end to my letter. I hope you had a pleasant journey to Welbeck, and that your Grace and all are well.

I am, Madam,

your Grace's most devoted,

E. M.

To the Same.

Sandleford, 6th of July.

MADAM,

I HAVE often taken up my pen and dipped it in ink, and prepared to dedicate and address its labours to your Grace, and have as often been prevented; and the tide of ink has either been stopped by some accident, or turned from its proper channel to rush through letters of business, or flow in compliments and congratulations, for of all these I have had many to write lately. Then, Madam, we farmers and housewives have many little cares: a black cloud that threatens the hay, a clap of thunder that may spoil the cream, an east wind that brings blast to our grain, can all darken the imagination, and spoil the conceits of the children of care. I hope your Grace received a great deal of pleasure at Sevenoaks, and found and left your friend in good health. I was unlucky to leave

town the day before you returned to it, but so the perverse Fates decreed. Mrs. Donnellan and I had some adventures at the inn, which I think deserve relation; we had spent the fire of our conversation, and were in serious, sober, and deliberate discourse, when Mrs. Ann Walton, who was at the inn, (with the late Mrs. W———, now Mrs. H———,) rushed into the room, let off a volley of compliments on our happy rencontre, expressed a desire to inform us of the pomps and vanities of Mrs. H———'s wedding, the number and richness of her clothes, the quantity, lustre, and form of her jewels; with a most comprehensive &c cætera of equipage, servants, plumb-cake feasts, and so on. The benevolent communicativeness of her temper, urged her on to describe this with such impetuous speed, such earnest violence, and uninterrupted force, that poor Donn and I could hardly insert a note of admiration; the most we could possibly introduce was Ah! While this vocal music was playing the thorough bass, the door again opened, and let in

Mrs. Hassel, the late Lord Stawel's, daughter; she came (as says the poet),

> Like light'ning through a cloud,
> Shining bright, and speaking loud,

and with a voice more audible, and discourse more voluble, than the other, went on without interruption, pause, or delay, till Mrs. H —— summoned her to play at commerce. Now for a simile to describe the silence and dulness that appeared on their departure: the blowing off of a whirlwind, the ceasing of thunder, a storm of hail going off in a soft shower, even a conjuror running away with one corner of a house, and leaving the inhabitants of the other in dumb astonishment and silent fear, are poor emblems, and faint comparisons, of the change that appeared in the room at our inn. We were so amazed and confounded, we stared at each other, and asked whether they were "spirits blest, or goblins damn'd;" wished we had spoken to them; inquired whether they vanished at the crowing of the cock, or the calling of the drawer.

At last hearing it was something that had had two husbands, we determined it must be flesh and blood, grew more easy, and drank our tea. I don't know whether your Grace knows the history of Mrs. Hassel: she was handsome and very rich, and married first to a fugitive Papist priest, who dying, she lamented for him so violently, that her grief was soon worn out, and she married a Major Hassel. Mrs. W—— too dispatched her sorrow in a reasonable time, and as soon as she had pulled off the widow's veil and weeds, put on her bridal garments, and is now gone into Yorkshire with her new husband. Don Quixote could not have devised a better adventure than the meeting these extraordinary persons, in such extraordinary spirits, on so extraordinary an occasion. I think my ancestor, surnamed Crusoe, voyaged through lands unknown to less purpose than I passed through the turnpike road to Newbury. As nothing suspends the faculties like astonishment, this great amazement so entirely subdued my small capacity, that I have stared without seeing,

listened without understanding, and spoke without meaning ever since; this, though not improbable, your Grace may be loth to believe; but as arguments are best illustrated by an example, I will give you a very extraordinary one, and which will entirely convince you of the truth of what I advanced. A few days ago I carried Mrs. Donnellan and the little Pere, to see Mr. Sloper's gardens and house, at a time when I was assured he was absent on his election; but seeing a man ride up the avenue at the same time, I took it into my head it might be Mr. Sloper, so I did not alight immediately. The housekeeper came to me, and asked if I would walk in; I said I should be glad to see the house if *Mr. Cibber* * was not at home; the housekeeper looked aghast, as if she had spoiled a custard, or broke a jelly glass; I coloured, Mrs. Donnellan twittered, Dr.

* Mr. Sloper's connection with Mrs. Cibber the actress is well known, as well as the conduct of Theophilus Cibber, her husband, his shameful connivance, and subsequent prosecution for damages.

Courayer sputtered half French half English, and began to search for the case of a spying glass I had dropt in my fright. As my organs of speech, rather than of sight seemed defective, I was little interested for my perspective, but sat in the coach making melancholy reflections on my mistake. Mrs. Donnellan could not compose her countenance, so that we were near a quarter of an hour before we got out of the coach; and after so long a pause I walked into the house greatly abashed. However, in the midst of my concern, it gave me some consolation that I could procure your Grace a very salutary and happy fit of laughing, of which I wish you the full benefit and pleasure. If I was not afraid of fatiguing you, I believe I could shake your spleen with a description of Dr. Courayer's figure, when he arrived here from Oxford, through a whole day's rain; but let it suffice that he shone with drops of water like the diamond ficoides. How his beaver was slouched, his coloured handkerchief twisted, and his small boots

stuck to his small legs; how the rain had uncurled his wig, the spleen dejected his countenance, the cramp spoiled his gait, I shall not describe; having set you a laughing at myself, it would look like a churlish pride, or mauvaise-honte, if I should divert you to any other subject. Mrs. Donnellan and Dr. Courayer join in desiring their best respects and compliments to your Grace. I hope my Lord Duke, and Mr. Achard, will accept of mine; and I desire that when you are disposed to laugh at any absurdity, you will not forget mine, who am serious and wise in nothing but in being your Grace's most devoted, sincere, and affectionate humble servant,

E. Montagu.

To the Same.

The 2nd of Aug.

MADAM,

I CANNOT tell what motive of curiosity might carry my letter round the world; but had it partaken of the inclinations of its writer, it would have made the best of its way to Bullstrode. I began to be very uneasy at not hearing from your Grace, and formed many fears, which haunted me in ugly shapes, till your letter put them to flight. I told the little Pere * that you accused him of laziness, and he promises amendment and a letter; he has, I presume, tasted of severer penance than writing to a fair and amiable Dutchess; and, I think, if such are our corrections for his sins, he cannot but be a zealous convert to the church of England. Your Grace owns that you laughed at my blunder about Mr. Cibber, but you do not say that you pitied the confusion that followed it. To have seen

* Courayer.

how I started and how I blushed, might have moved pity, I should have thought, in the hardest heart; but though I have told the story, with all its melancholy circumstances, to many charitable and well disposed Christians, I have not seen the least symptom of compassion in them, but many signs of mirth, and unmerciful laughter. Yesterday we went to see a very extraordinary place: a gentleman has built a house on the summit of a prodigious hill, where there is not a drop of water, nor a stick of wood; he has planted some fir-trees, which are watered every day by carts, that bring the water about three miles; he has sunk a well to the centre of the earth, from whence some laborious horses draw him as much water as may wash his face, or, in a liberal hour, supply his tea kettle; the wind plays about his house in so riotous a manner, that a person must poise themselves in a very exact manner to maintain their ground, and walk on two legs, with an erect countenance, as it is the glory and pride of human nature to do. I dare

say the next generation there, if they are not of an obstinate temper, will walk on all four. The soil in this place is so barren that there is hardly a blade of grass to be seen ; and the poor sheep that wander about must change their vegetable for animal food, devour each other, and dine on mutton like their betters. The first house this gentleman built was in a bottom, where the ground was all wet and marshy, overgrown with willows and alders, and extremely peopled with frogs ; there he found himself ill at ease, and no doubt but in time, would have died of a dropsy, as I now fear he will be destroyed by the wind cholic. But, in the mean time, I wish he may do something for the good of mankind, and make use of his situation, so adapted thereto, in improving weather-cocks and windmills. A few days ago we were at Miss Lisle's wood and grotto, the work of nine sisters, who in disposition, as well as number, bear some resemblance to the Muses.

On Monday we think of going to Lady

Fane's grotto, at Basildon, of which I will give your Grace the best account I can. One who bears so true a respect to every individual shell, cannot but truly venerate a number of them happily met together, and therefore I will give your Grace a particular description of them; I mean of their appearance; as to their names, unless I had their godfather Shaw with me, I shall not be able to tell them. Mrs. Donnellan and I are going to make a shell frame for a looking glass: I think a looking-glass to be properest for the first work, as every body will be sure to find something they like in it; indeed I should be afraid of showing this piece of work to you, who forget and neglect yourself to give attention to any thing else; but I do not so fear your criticism as not to wish you were to dress your head in it; and must I never hope for the happiness of seeing your Grace here! Let me have a promise under your hand for next summer.

I am,

ever your Grace's most devoted,

E. Montagu.

To the Same.

1743.

MADAM,

I AM pleased to think this letter will find your Grace in the regions of liberty and pleasure, free from all the chains and shackles of ceremony and constraint. To have our actions regulated by little precise forms, and our words turned to the tune of other people's opinions, takes away all the comfort of life. All inquisition into a person's actions or opinions, more than they choose to declare, is of a very tyrannous nature; and a peevish opposition to the opinions they do declare, is very opposite to the end of conversation. It is from this reason there is little charity among different sects; we are not angry that our neighbour is in the wrong, but that he thinks us so. Were the liberty to dissent allowed without mark or notice, we should scarce know there was any difference of opinion among men. It would be very ridiculous if all

the squinting people in the world were to profess enmity to the rest of the world, or be treated as enemies, because they cannot make their eyes meet on the same point that others, not liable to that infirmity, do. If we direct our steps aright, why should we quarrel about the landmarks that direct us? Peace on earth, and good will towards men, was the wish of Divine benevolence; would we endeavour to follow it, how happy would be every private family in their little system, and how much so the world in general! But it is so much the custom amongst us to plague each other, that were it not for some particular friendships, where the desire to oblige and make easy is prevalent, and the foundation of the happy commerce and union, this life would be a warfare none but the contentious could maintain. I was in hopes to have heard when you would come to town; I wish you may come up to us soon after the twenty-fourth of this month, which is the time I propose for going to London for the inoculation. I

think there is no danger of hot weather after the middle of September; Dr. Mead says it is the best time for me; so, I hope, nothing will prevent my being in town as I propose. It would be an inexpressible joy to me to meet you there. I will write to Lady Andover so long a letter she shall have the fear of my pen before her eyes as long as she lives. Matlock must be well worth seeing; we have nothing here of the wild and uncultivated sort. I intend to go and indulge reveries at an old castle, where Chaucer made his fairies gambol with as much grace and prettiness as the Muses of old on the hill of Parnassus: the castle is on a rising, just above Newbury, and commands a pretty view of the country. The prospect is of sufficient extent to let the poetic fancy rove at pleasure among the beauties of nature. Pray where is Pen? Will she produce a sprig of bays? It must be a little Master Apollo, or a Miss Minerva, from parents of such art and science. I have sent your Grace a copy of a letter Lord Orford sent to General Churchill;

if ever he was to be envied it was when he wrote that letter. It seems to come from a mind pleased with every thing about it, and easy in itself amidst the refinements of luxury and expense, without the madness of intemperance, or inconveniences of prodigality: but, with all his elegance, I do not think he shews true taste, as a lover and friend of human kind, who has sacrificed his vanity, and subjected his avarice to the public good. The sweetest music is well deserved praise, and an untainted heart the best possession, and to live in the esteem of good people is the fairest abode. All the adornments of vice are but like the pomp and state of a funeral; the shew pleases for a minute, till we remember it is only celebrating the misery and misfortune of human kind, and hiding under pomp the corruption of our fellow-creature. I hope this letter will find you well, and the dear little ones safe, at Bullstrode; these little creatures add to our care: but how unhappy are they who have nothing worth caring for! My little boy will cost me

a sigh at parting; it is a great pleasure to me to see him gathering strength every day, and I hope making a provision of health for years to come.

I am,
my dearest Lady Dutchess's
very affectionate, and sincere friend, and
grateful humble servant,
E. MONTAGU.

*** Mrs. Montagu was inoculated this year without success.

To the Same.

Dec. 8, 1743.

MADAM,

I MAY now wish your Grace joy of my Lord Duke's recovery, which indeed has been happy to the greatest degree after so bad an accident. You have put me into a sufficient fright about Mrs. Delany;* by what you say, I suspect I

* Mrs. Pendarvis married Dr. Delany, the friend of Swift, 9th of June, 1743.

directed my letter to Mrs. Pendarvis. I think myself the more capable of it, because, at Allerthorpe, when I wrote to acquaint my mother I could not take a journey to town because I was breeding, I signed myself Robinson, though really, while I wore that name, I do not remember I was ever in the like condition. I cannot tell what to say to Mrs. Delany about this mistake. I am sure I approved the match, and consented with my whole heart; but for this slip of the pen I cannot account; perhaps it might happen from the fright I was in for the Duke; I am sure Mr. Drummond could not be in a greater fright, when he saw all the Hanoverians in a panic. I want to know whether the Secretary confessed his sins in his fear; for if a fright can make a minister forget his hypocrisy, well may it make me forget a name. I hope you found Lady Oxford well at Salt Hill. I sigh, whenever I pass by Slough to think of the days I have seen. I find the power of Bullstrode mighty still, and ever grieve to think I

pass by it without calling. I hear her Grace of Kent did me the honour to ask a great many civil questions after me of Mrs. Meadows. I design to go to visit the old dragon as soon as I come to town. I am afraid Mr. Montagu's continuing to vote against the ministry will hurt my complexion as bad as another lying in. I have been petrifying my brains over a most solid and ponderous performance of a woman in this neighbourhood. Having always a love to see Phœbus in petticoats, I borrowed a book, written by an ancient gentlewoman skilled in Latin, dipt in Greek, and absorbed in Hebrew, besides a modern gift of tongues. By this learned person's instruction was Dr. Pocock (her son) skilled in antique lore, while other people are learning to spell monosyllables. But Hebrew being the mother tongue, you know, it is no wonder he learnt it. His gingerbread was marked with Greek characters, and his bread and butter, instead of glass windows, was printed with Arabic. He had a mummy for his jointed baby, and a little

pyramid for his play-house. His copy-book was filled with hieroglyphics; and nothing modern and vulgar could be employed in the education of this learned woman's son. Mrs. Pocock lives in a village very near us, but has not visited here, so I have not had an opportunity to observe her conversation; but really I believe she is a good woman, though but an indifferent author. She amuses herself in the country so as to be chearful and sociable at threescore, is always employed either in reading, working, or walking; and I do not hear that she is pedantic. What use she makes of her Hebrew I cannot tell; but it is a strange piece, not of female, but of male curiosity, to learn it. I am told she always carries a Greek or Hebrew bible to church. I desire your Grace to make ten thousand apologies for me to Mrs. Delany, if it is really true that I would have robbed her of a good name; but I hope you only said this to put me in terrors. I desire my best compliments to her and Dr. Delany, to whom I wish very well, though I have

offered the shadow of a great injury in seeming to deprive them of each other. I send my friendly love to dear Donnellan, my sincere good wishes to my Lord Duke for recovering his mischief, and to the little ones that they keep free from all harm. I congratulate Mr. Achard upon the Duke's recovery, and to Mr. Drummond I wish a perseverance in mirth, wit, and good humour. I am ever your Grace's most devoted

E. M.

To Mrs. Donnellan.

Sandleford, December 15, 1743.

DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR letters always give me great pleasure; and in my resolution of not writing, the Dutchess of Portland and you are excepted. It is indeed sincerely true that the posture does not agree with me, and, as true, that I am tired of leading

the life of a scribbler, for in much writing there is some trouble and no improvement. You are very kind in your concern for my health; I am now better; I have not suffered much, though my nerves have sometimes played their leger-de-main with me; but their dark magic, working upon the mind, has not yet encircled me. I have as few fears as most people; nor has my heart any sorrows real or imaginary. I have spent my time, during the last fortnight, not much to my mind; I am not one of those choice exalted spirits that want no assistance from society; it is my infirmity that I cannot live without an agreeable companion, and my misfortune to find in few people the qualities that please me. Morose could not be more miserable at a puppet show, or a ballad opera, than I am in some company; so that I frequently cannot avoid solitude without falling into worse punishment. I can bear twenty disagreeable people at a time, but sicken at a tête-à-tête with one whom I dislike. I expect my brother Morris here on the

20th, my sister on the 23d, with Mrs. Cotes, and Mr. and Mrs. Freind, whom, to my great grief I shall not be able to keep long. Mr. Montagu hopes to come here the end of this week, but I fear he may not be spared from his attendance on the House. The papers say his wisdom squire S———, is made a peer; he will surely be as genteel a man of quality as he is an able minister; and Madam D——, with her cares of the nation, will make an admirable Countess; she is genteel enough for a lady of the bedchamber to Huncamunca, or the boisterous queen of the Philistines. I wish much I could see her presented at court for this new honour. I thought Fortune had raised his Wisdom for the jest of a day but I find the joke is to last longer. In ancient times people were made great because they had served their country, now they become so by hurting it. I wish I had one half of you here; I would not take all of you from so agreeable a society as your are in, but I hope we shall get a quiet season in the country together. I have laid

your kiss upon a rosy cheek; the little man is very well, and thanks you for your present; he will do as much for you when he is bigger.

I am, dear Madam,
most affectionately your's,

E. M.

To the Rev. Mr. Freind.

March the 3d, 1744.

MOST EXCELLENT COUSINS,

L'EMBARRAS DE LONDRES is such it really leaves one no leisure for any thing right, reasonable, friendly, and comfortable; all that Boileau says in rhime against l'embarras de Paris I think, in plain prose, of this troublesome town; but the poets have a great advantage over poor prose mortals; a strong expression or a bold metaphor is with us harsh and rude; prose satire seems abusive, and a complaint is called scolding; while, in rhime, the

poet sings so sweetly we are soothed with his dumps, instructed by his chiding, and half pleased with his abuse. We got to Dover-street on Monday before it was dark, though we did not set out from Sandleford till after seven. As soon as Aurora, with her rosy fingers, unbarred the gates of light, so soon, and no sooner, did Betty, the lean maid, unbar our wooden shutter, and undraw our camblet window curtain, with her red hands, chopt with the work of many a well washed day. But, after we had shaken off sleep, it was no such easy matter to part with little Punch, with whom we played and pleased ourselves as long as we could afford time, then went to Reading, and there took a post chaise, like bold demoiselles errantes. The boy blew the horn, and away we went with some signs of importance, our haste signifying we were people much wanted somewhere, and who had no time to throw away. Fortune, who favours the bravery of men, looked enviously at our female courage; and, perhaps, alarmed so see wheels that

turned faster than her own, did very uncivilly lay some stumbling block in the way of one of our chaise horses; down he fell, prostrate in the dust; the ladies errant dismounted; a mob gathered round them; however the untaught multitude pitied and assisted them; in the mean time drove by a coach of polite people, who had not the humanity to ask what assistance was wanted; however, we got into our chaise, and away we went with great spirit. At Hounslow our own chaise and horses met us. We were not sorry, at the end of our journey, to get into an easy vehicle; much we rejoiced at its pleasanter motion? when our coachman, inspired with pride, by which cometh contention, and by contention disaster, runs a race with a coach and four, and overturns us; so, I must tell you, having no Voiture to say it for me, nous nous trouvons toujours sur nos pieds, and accordingly found ourselves no worse, but, after all adventures, were brought safe to our good friend in Dover-street, where we forgot all evils and accidents;

for, as Sir W. Temple says, whom I am just reading, and therefore happen to remember, a friend is the medicine of life. And now I am sitting in my easy chair with that ease and dignity one feels after remembrance of high atchievements and great fatigues. Mr. Montagu had proposed coming to us on the Saturday, finding nothing of consequence was coming on in the Parliament-house, but my letter informing him of our design of being in London on Monday, that my sister might be ready to go down with my father, made him defer his journey. We shall take the first opportunity of going down to the little man when there is nothing of importance going forward in the Parliament-house. We were very impatient for your letter, having a thousand fears for Mrs. Freind, and great anxiety about your children. Your letter I delivered to the amiable Dutchess; she was much pleased with it, and, I assure you, she thinks of you as you deserve. How came Mrs. Freind to be taken for a parrot? she has less of the parrot than

any woman in the world; a parrot is the very reverse of her character; but I assure you I know a great many parrots; I met four, in a visit yesterday, with an ancient magpye for their chaperon. You wonder I say nothing of public news perhaps; but we are all gaping with curiosity, and there is no intelligence to inform us, nor invention to amuse us; there has not even been a false rumour these three days; one would think truth and discretion prevailed, but those who have the happiness of keeping a great deal of good company know the contrary. I am glad our coach-horses performed your journey well; I hope every thing that belongs, in any manner to me, is at the service of my friends. I cannot take to myself any praise for asking for the company I much esteem, nor for taking all the care in my power of one I love and value like my cousin Grace. I thought my sister must have gone to Horton on Monday, but we have a reprieve for a few days, I fear for less than

a week; she is now at the play. We were at the ridotto on Thursday; it was very disagreeable; every individual was dull, and altogether they were troublesome; while I was gaping and yawning, I heard people crying "This is a charming ridotto!" A disposition to be pleased is a great happiness. I wish I had more pleasure in a crowd for fear I should grow too retired; when fancy loses a pleasurable toy, it is well if reason substitutes something of more solid contentment in its place; but really the world affords little enough of happiness, even if we take the serious and comic into the account. I believe the domestic happiness I enjoy makes me indifferent to the trifles abroad, which can bear no comparison with the pleasure and felicity of living with those one loves and esteems; and for amusement, no puppet-show is like th pleasant humours of my own punch at Sandleford. I hope my god-daughter will get quite rid of her complaints; many have fits at her age, and get well through

them. I am your's and my dear cousin's most obedient servant, and most sincere friend.

E. Montagu.

To the Same.

Dover-street, the 14th of March, 1744.

Most excellent Cousin,

It is a terrible thing to be self-convicted, I am so sensible I am in the wrong, that I think it presumption to imagine an apology can do me any service, so take the truth as it is. I have been a little idle, and a great deal out of health. I was so pestered with a cough I could not write, nor do any thing, but loll in an easy chair. No sooner was I able to stir out, but looking in that roll of courtesy, called a visiting book, I found myself such a debtor to ceremony it was the business of my life to get clear of those obligations; and cards fly about that,

like the leaves of the sibyls of old, prescribe the actions and mark the fate of every day. I was summoned to a drum at Mrs. Manwaring's, where I saw my cousin, Septimus Robinson,* dressed as gay as a lover; but whether that was the footing he was upon I do not know. I am ashamed I did not acknowledge the receipt of the Bath water; my mother thinks her soul in peril of purgatory till she has paid for it; for charity's sake make her easy upon that head; and that I may have a comfortable conscience also, be so good as to pay Miss Grinfield for two feather tippets she bought for me. The Dutchess of Portland would have taken it ill if you had not wrote to her. She communicated your last letter to me, and seemed much pleased with it. We never cease to make honourable mention of you. I wish I knew what people at Bath expect and desire to hear from their friends in London; would you hear news, politics, scandal, or what? Suppose I

* Afterwards Sir Septimus Robinson, Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod.

blend them together, and give you political-censorious news; I think that must please all palates: there are few who have not some relish of either novelty, business, or satire; the first will please the young, whose passion is curiosity, and their delight surprize; the second suits the middle-aged, who are engaged very deeply in worldly pursuits; the third will best amuse those who have found the sin and vanity that waits on business and pleasure. After all my promises of such variety, I do not know how to pick up one article of either news politics, or scandal. The malecontents, and enemies of the constitution, agree we have the best regulated ridottos in Europe; those who do not honour K—— G——, admire King Lear; and however they may disapprove Lord Granvill, they declare Garrick to be an incomparable actor. Some who think the exchequer ill-managed, and profess the court wants dignity, live in hopes of the prettiest puppet show that ever was seen. And indeed both those who were for

insisting upon the Dutch coming into the war, and they of the contrary opinion, all agree that the Dutch children are the worst rope dancers and tumblers that ever they saw. Lestock and Matthews are now examined before the Parliament as to their conduct in the Mediterranean; and, it is said by some who have read it, that Thompson's new play is equal to Otway's Orphan, and Rowe's Fair Penitent; in short, it is amazing how serious and how merry, how idle and how busy, this town is. In the morning all throng to the senate-house, and at night to the play-house. Those who bewail the poverty of the nation in the morning, part with gold for two hours entertainment at the oratorio at night. Those who talk of faction, did they but see how full of powder, and how empty of thought, the heads of the hydra appear to be, they would fear nothing from so spruce a set of senators. I think the town was never so gay or so fond of amusements. If you expect I should tell you any thing important in

the way of news, it is impossible; all is so blended with pleasure and gaiety that the happiness of the nation, and the success of the puppet-show, are talked of in the same moment. My sister is much obliged to you and Mrs. Freind for your letters. Pray don't forget to set my mother's conscience to rest about this Bath water.

I am, my good friend,
your's with great esteem and sincerity,
E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Sandleford, July 1, 1774.

MOST EXCELLENT COUSIN,

INDOLENCE deprives me of half the pleasures of life. It is amazing, that having pen, ink, and leisure, I should not have wrote to you this month, though there has not a day passed of that month in

which I have not thought of you with esteem and regard, love of your conversation, and desire of your correspondence. When I had the pleasure of your letter it served me as sal-volatile and hartshorn, and saved one fee, at least, to the doctor, as well as a phial of drops at the apothecary's. I was really a good deal out of health when your letter came to my hands. I had a very violent cold, or a moderate fever, I am not critic enough in maladies to know which; however, a few days set me at ease, and a few more brought me to the happiness a mother finds in the company of her child, and that which every reasonable creature must find in the enjoyment of the country at this agreeable and delightful season. I am at a great loss to know what obligations you have to me; I can recollect none, though you seem to think you have. Is the world really so bad that it is become an obligation if we love those qualities we admire, and do not envy perfections we cannot attain? If so, you are really very much obliged to me;

for I take pleasure in your virtues, rejoice in your successes, wish prosperity to all your undertakings; I am interested for your children, and am in love with your wife as much as you are; your happiness makes a part of mine, and your excellent conduct a part of my good conscience; so nearly am I interested for you, and my dear cousin Grace. I often think how happily you must pass your time in the groves at Witney; sometimes contemplating the order of the universe, and beauty of the creation, with that dignity of reasoning which becomes philosophers; then gently inclining to human affections, and admiring Master Bobby on his hobby-horse, and Miss with her coral. I rejoice at the recovery of her health; I know the joy there is in seeing these tender objects of one's care thriving well, and increasing in health and strength. Punch is a fine fellow; he is greatly improved since you saw him; he is now an admirable tumbler; I lay him down on a blanket on the ground every morning before he is dressed, and

at night when he is stripped, and there he rolls and tumbles about to his great delight; and I assure you it makes him very nimble, and I think it is a good practice; and if my god-daughter is not a prude, I would recommend the same practice to her, provided also that she be not apt to take cold. I hope you will not be too much surprized if you hear I have learned to lisp, and cannot walk securely without a leading-string; I keep company with my child till I fancy I shall grow like one. However, I cannot help giving myself up to the joys of the heart, and, immersed in parental felicity, I envy neither the refined pleasures of the modern Dilettanti, nor the ancient Epicureans; provided I have the delight and joy of the heart, I cannot complain if I am not made for higher pleasures. I expect my happiness from natural affections; the pleasures of contemplation are made for the few, the joys of the heart are known to all, and are not ingrafted on science, nor need to be cultivated by art. I spoke to the Dutchess

of P. that you had desired me to enquire where the fleams were had, that I might pay for them; she desired you would accept them, and said it was a trifle. I am sorry I cannot be so happy as to wait on you this summer at Witney, but we are bound for the north.

I am, my dear Sir, &c. &c.

E. Montagu.

To the Dutchess of Portland.

Newbold Verdon, August 9, 1744.

Madam,

I did not set out on my journey so soon as we proposed; the letter we sent to my brother Montagu having made the tour of England before it reached him, so we waited for an answer. The thirty-first of July we set out for Oxford; where we spent an agreeable day in seeing new objects and old friends. The good people

from Witney were so kind as to come over to see us, and shewed us what was best worth our attention. The University, I think, is finer than that at Cambridge, but does not excel so much as I had imagined; Alma Mater however presides in great dignity there. I had hoped to have seen Mr. Potts, but was informed he was at Bullstrode, or I should have sent to have begged the favour of seeing him. The mighty Shaw had left the classic ground to take care of his glebe in the country. The first of August we went to Stowe, which is beyond description; it gives the best idea of Paradise that can be: even Milton's images and descriptions fall short of it; and indeed a Paradise it must be to every mind in a state of tolerable innocence. Without the soul's sunshine every object is dark; but a contented mind, in so sweet a situation must feel the most "sober certainty of waking bliss" The buildings are indeed, in themselves, disagreeably crowded, but being dedicated to patriots, heroes, law-givers, and poets, and men of

ingenuity and invention, they receive a dignity from the persons to whom they are consecrated. Others, that are sacred to imaginary powers, raise a pleasing enthusiasm in the mind. What different ideas arise in a walk in Kensington gardens, or the Mall, where almost every face wears impertinence! the greater part of them unknown, and those whom we are acquainted with, only discover to us that they are idle, foolish, vain, and proud. At Stowe you walk amidst heroes and deities, powers and persons, whom we have been taught to honour; who have embellished the world with arts, or instructed it in science; defended their country and improved it. The temples that pleased me most, for the design to which they were consecrated, were those to Ancient Virtue, to Friendship, to the Worthies, and to Liberty. On Saturday last we arrived at my brother Montagu's; who has made this place one of the most charming and pleasant I ever saw; the gardens are delightful, the park very beautiful, the house neat and agreeable,

and every thing about it in an elegant taste. My brother has made great improvements. It was a very bad place when Lord Crewe left it to him, and had no ornament but fine wood; now there is water in great beauty, grand avenues from every point, fine young plantations, and in short every thing that can please the eye. But nothing gives me so much pleasure as the obliging and friendly reception of the master, who has entertained us in a kind, an elegant, and magnificent manner. It is delightful to observe the regularity and order of the family, and the happiness that appears in the countenence of every friend and servant. We shall see T—— in our way; but I take little delight in those shades from whence Astrea has been chased. I look upon the oaks that shade a virtuous owner as a kind of temple to innocence; but when persons of another character take sanctuary there, I look on them only as canopies for luxury and idleness.

I am, Madam, &c. &c.

E. Montagu.

To Mrs. Donnellan.

York, August, 1744.

I AM now writing to you from the very place from whence I began my journey of life. You will think that I may feel some uneasiness on the reflection of returning to this place after so many years wandering through the world, with so little improvement and addition of merit, which is all that time leaves behind it. Too true it is that reflection has given some pain, and cost me a sigh or two; but it is some comfort that my blank page has not been blotted with the stains of vice, if any good deeds shall ever be written, there they will be legible, and suffer no various interpretations even from critics. Twenty-two years and ten months ago, I was just the age my son is now; as his way through life will lie through the high roads of ambition and pleasure, he will hardly pass so unspotted, but, I hope, a better informed, traveller

than I have done through my little private path. His account will consist of many articles, pray God the balance may be right! I would have him think joy is for the pure of heart, and not giddily sacrifice the smallest part of integrity in hope of making large amends by deeds of estimation. But thus it is always with his sex, and a man thinks it is no more necessary to be as innocent as a woman, than to be as fair. Poor little man, may heaven protect him! I wish he may be of as contented a spirit at the same age as his mother; and that his cheerfulness too may arise, not from love of himself, but from the possession of good and amiable friends. I would, to this purpose, wish him as many brothers, but I have some private objections arising from self-love against that wish, so I will leave that to his merit and discernment which to me has arisen from accident. I ought to have epistolized you before I came so near the end of my journey, but we filled up our time with seeing all the places that lay within our route; the first

was Oxford, which you know so well I shall say nothing about it, nor would the Muses permit my grey goose quill to describe their sacred haunt. From thence we went to Stowe, of which so much has been said and written, I shall only tell you how I was affected by the gardens, of which probably neither verse nor prose writer would ever inform you. It is indeed a princely garden, more like, I believe, to that where the sapient King held dalliance with his fair Ægyptian spouse, than to Paradise,—its beauties are the effects of expense and taste; the objects you see are various, yet the result is not variety. Lord Cobham has done by his garden as kings do by their subjects, made difference by title and artificial addition, where nature made none; yet altogether it is a pleasing scene, where a philosophic mind would enjoy full happiness, the disappointed ambitious some consolation. The buildings are many of them censured by connoisseurs as bad, however, their intention and use is good; they are, for the most part, dedicated to

the memory of the wise, the good, and great, so they raise in the ambitious a noble emulation, in the humble a virtuous veneration; kinds of homage that mend the heart that pays them. From Stowe we went to my brother Montagu's in Leicestershire, where we passed a week very agreeably. The next place we saw was T———; the house is large, but the company it has of late received makes one see it with prejudice; the luxury of a hog-stye must be disgustful; indeed I was glad to get out of the house, every creature in it, and every thing one saw was displeasing; as to the park, it wants nature's cheerful livery, the sprightly green; the famous cascade did not please me, who have seen some made by the bounteous hand of nature, to which man's magnificence is poor and *chetive.* From hence we came to York, where we have just been viewing the cathedral; of all the Gothic buildings I ever saw, the most noble, taken together, or considered in parts. Gothic architecture, like Gothic government, seems to make strength and

her wit was so abundant by nature as to be inextinguishable, she found means so to temper its lustre, that it should no longer dazzle by its brightness, or excite apprehension of a mischievous consequence. In her youth her beauty was most admired in the peculiar animation and expression of her blue eyes, with high arched dark eye-brows, and in the contrast of her brilliant complexion with her dark brown hair. She was of the middle stature, and stooped a little, which gave an air of modesty to her countenance, in which the features were otherwise so strongly marked as to express an elevation of sentiment befitting the most exalted condition. As she advanced in age, her appearance was distinguished by that superiority of demeanour which is acquired by the habit of intercourse with persons of the most cultivated talents and the most polished manners. Her very look bespoke the fire of genius, arising from strength of understanding, refinement of taste, and solidity of judgment. If to these qualifications we add the

soundness of principle, the tenderness of benevolence, and the calm piety of her latter years, we shall behold a picture of an individual who might be justly termed an ornament to her sex and country.

The reader has some distance to travel before he arrives at the period in which Mrs. Montagu attained her greatest perfection in epistolary writing. The Editor will be excused if he entertains a hope that the reader will then be induced to allow that few persons in any language can be thought to surpass her in this species of composition.

The remaining part of the series will be published by degrees, as the health and leisure of the Editor will admit, and as the curiosity or approbation of the public may seem to require.

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